

'Flying car' crash in Marion County injures two

2014-10-21

orlandosentinel.com

Two men suffered injuries Tuesday after a "flying car" they were in crashed and caught fire in Marion County after a brief flight.

The 49-year-old pilot and the passenger, in his twenties, were both taken to Ocala Regional Medical Center, according to Marion County Fire Rescue.

Officials said the pilot was transported as a "trauma alert" while the passenger did not suffer life-threatening injuries.

The crash happened around 9:30 a.m. at Dunnellon Airport, according to the Marion County Sheriff's Office.

"This homemade vehicle managed to make flight with two people inside but then crashed and caught fire," Capt. James Pogue said. "Both occupants are being treated at the hospital for minor injuries."

The National Transportation Safety Board and the Federal Aviation Administration are not responding "because they do not recognize this as an aircraft," Pogue said.

The crimes division and evidence team with the Marion County Sheriff's Office are documenting the scene, Pogue said.

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'Plastic' Halloween skulls found in Connecticut are human remains

yahoo.com



Workers At Conn Trash Hauling Company Find Human Skulls In The Garbage

Workers At Conn Trash Hauling Company Find Human Skulls In The Garbage

By Richard Weizel

MILFORD Conn. (Reuters) - A pair of Connecticut junk haulers was stunned to learn on Friday that two skulls picked up at the cluttered home of a deceased man on the day before Halloween

were human remains, not made of plastic as they had thought.

The skulls were among thousands of occult-related items that David Odice and Charlie Inzucchi of The Junkluggers Junk Removal Co cleared out of the Fairfield home where Robert L. DeVitto lived until his death two weeks ago at age 56.

"Being Halloween makes this real creepy and spooky, especially considering what else we found in the house," Odice, 43, said on Friday. "There were thousands of things related to the occult: magazines, videos, crystals, amulets, all kinds of new age and metaphysical stuff."

After finishing the job on Thursday the contractors dumped the skulls, and the rest of the dead man's paranormal and satanic-themed belongings, at a Stamford recycling center.

After noticing the skulls appeared human, an attendant at the center notified police. Images of the skulls were sent to the state Medical Examiner's Office, which later determined the skulls, one male and one female, to be human.

Stamford Police Lieutenant Diedrich Hohn said on Friday the department will know in two weeks the ages of the skulls and whether a criminal investigation is required.

"It's one of the most bizarre cases we've had, especially being Halloween," Hohn said. "If the skulls turn out to be 120 years old, obviously we don't have a big crime here. But we want to be sure the skulls were not part of a grave robbery."

Hohn said police tracked down the owner's father, Robert J. DeVitto, 89, also of Fairfield, who told them his son had recently died. DeVitto could not be reached for comment on Friday.

(Reporting by Richard Weizel; Writing by Frank McGurty; Editing by Eric Beech)



skelton-bulgaria

Posted on October 10, 2014
in Paranormal | 518 Views |
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A “vampire grave” containing a skeleton with a stake driven through its chest has been unearthed by a man known as “Bulgaria’s Indiana Jones”.

Professor Nikolai Ovcharov – a crusading archaeologist who has dedicated his life to unearthing mysteries of

ancient civilisations – said that he had made the discovery while excavating the ruins of Perperikon, an ancient Thracian city located in southern Bulgaria, close to the border with Greece.

The city, inhabited since 5,000 BC but only discovered 20 years ago, is believed to be the site of the Temple of Dionysius – the Greek God of wine and fertility. And among the finds at the site, which includes a hilltop citadel, a fortress and a sanctuary, are a series of “vampire graves”.

On Thursday Professor Ovcharov announced that he had found a remarkably-preserved Medieval skeleton at the site in what he termed “a vampire grave”.

“We have no doubts that once again we’re seeing an anti-vampire ritual being carried out,” said Professor Ovcharov. He explained that the metal was driven through the corpse to stop a “bad” person from rising from the dead and terrorising the living.

via Telegraph.

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'Vampire' Burial Uncovered In Perperikon - Novinite.com - Sofia News Agency

Society » ARCHAEOLOGY | October 10, 2014, Friday // 11:08 | Views: 1353 | Comments: 0

novinite.com



Bulgaria: 'Vampire' Burial Uncovered In Perperikon

Grave of a young man on whom was performed an anti-vampire ritual was uncovered at **archaeological excavations** at the **Perperikon** site, reports News.bg.

The man was buried with an iron knife in his heart. His left leg, cut in three pieces was buried beside him.

According to the head of the excavations, Professor **Nikolai**

Ovcharov told journalists this was another ritual against vampires, typically performed on people who died of unnatural causes or killed themselves.

Another **grave** was found near the **grave** of the young man. In it were buried a young woman and child, positioned like a Virgin Mary with child icon. According to Ovcharov, this type of **burial** was a prayer for protection against the plague.

Both graves were dated to the first half of XIII c. A.D.

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'It was like dragging two sacks of potatoes through the water': Huge catfish caught by British man Tom Herron

October 09, 2014

news.com.au



Tom Herron (centre) with his record breaking 221lb catfish. Also pictured are his friends Ashley Scott (left) and Andy Cooper. Mr Herron said it was like "dragging two sacks of potatoes through the water".
Source: Snapper Media

IT could so easily have been the one that got away. A story about that giant fish that no one but the guy who

almost caught it could vouch for.

Except Tom Herron, 68, did catch it — a mammoth 8ft 1in long and 221lbs rare albino catfish. In doing so he smashed a record his mate John Edwards, 74, set only an hour before when he reeled in an albino catfish that weighed 205lbs.

Cornwall-based Mr Herron told the Daily Star: "It was like dragging two sacks of potatoes through the water, it was unbelievable. I've been fishing for 50 years and this was the biggest fight I've ever had."



John Edwards (left) with his catfish and Tom Herron (right) with his record breaking catfish with their friend Ashley Scott. The two friends hooked the rare fish just minutes apart. *Source: Snapper Media*



Tom Herron with his record-breaking catfish.
Source: Snapper Media

It was the biggest albino they have ever seen caught on the river. "Apparently they make good eating — but you'd need a lot of chips," he told the newspaper.

The trip, two hours south of Barcelona, was organised by a British tour firm, whose staff couldn't believe what they were seeing.

They had never seen a brace of albino catfish, let alone two world records smashed

in one day.

A spokesman said: "Albino catfish of that size are very rare indeed. This is the biggest we've ever seen."

The albino catfish gets its unusual appearance as a result of a genetic anomaly that causes the fish to lack pigment and thereby appear white. They are considered trophy fish.

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SYBIL LUDINGTON
HERE ENDED HER NIGHT RIDE
APRIL 26, 1777 TO SUMMON
MILITIA OF COL. LUNDINGTON'S
REGIMENT TO REPEL BRITISH
RAID AT DANBURY CONN.

NYSED 1932-KENT
TOWN HISTORIAN 2008

4-acre spider web may be the grossest thing you will see this Halloween*

gizmodo.com



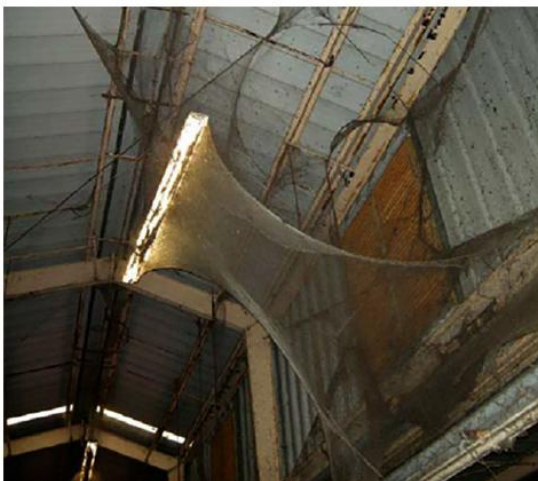
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This report on a 4-acre spider web covering a building has made shiver and curl in disgust. You are looking at the Baltimore Wastewater Treatment Plant, where 4 acres of their facility were covered by a spider web made by an estimated *107 million spiders*. That's 35,176 spiders per cubic meter!

In fact, the scientists who have documented this extraordinary spider mega city say that's a very "markedly conservative" estimate. In fact, it was overwhelming even for experts like them:

We were unprepared for the sheer scale of the spider population and the extraordinary masses of both three dimensional and sheet-like webbing that blanketed much of the facility's cavernous interior. Far greater in magnitude than any previously recorded aggregation of orb-weavers, the visual impact of the spectacle was was nothing less than astonishing.

In places where the plant workers had swept aside the webbing to access equipment, the silk lay piled on the floor in rope-like clumps as thick as a fire hose.



Yes, that's a lamp being pulled by a spider web. You know what I think?

* Or ever.

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Friday, October 24, 2014

Lobo Wolf Girl of Devil's River

In 1845, a mysterious girl was seen running on all fours in the company of wolves attacking a herd of goats near San Felipe, Mexico. The story was corroborated a year later when the girl was seen again, this time devouring a freshly killed goat. As the story goes, alarmed local villagers mounted a search for the girl days later, eventually capturing her. Supposedly she howled incessantly throughout the night, attracting a pack of wolves that charged into the village in an apparent rescue attempt. She was able to sneak out of her enclosure and escape.

The girl was not seen again until 1852, when she was reportedly witnessed suckling two wolf cubs on a sand bar in a river. After being seen, she gathered up the two cubs, ran back into the woods and was never heard from again.

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After four months at sea, ghost ship with 11 petrified corpses washes up in Barbados

Giles Tremlett in Madrid

theguardian.com



The white ghost ship rolled in the Atlantic swell as the rescue boats approached it 70 nautical miles off Ragged Point, one of the most easterly places on the Caribbean island of Barbados.

The yacht was unmarked, 6 metres (20ft) long, and when Barbadian coastguard officers boarded it, they

made a gruesome find. The boat's phantom crew was made up of the desiccated corpses of 11 young men, huddled in two separate piles in the small cabin. Dressed in shorts and colourful jerseys, they had been partially petrified by the salt water, sun and sea breezes of the Atlantic Ocean. They appeared to have come from far away.

The sea-battered yacht, identified by one local ship's captain as of French design, was towed into the port at Willoughby Fort, Bridgetown, and the bodies, by now wrapped in plastic bags, were heaved on to the quay.

In a part of the world where legends and myths have often been furnished by the sea, the mystery of the dead men soon provoked curious speculation.

An air ticket from Senegal Airlines and a tragic note written by one of the men as he was preparing to die have, however, helped investigators from several countries set about unravelling the mystery.

For, although the floating coffin appeared off the coast of the Americas, those on board had set off four months earlier from the Cape Verde islands, off the African coast, and had been heading for the European soil of the Canary Islands.

The evidence reportedly points to them having been cut adrift in the Atlantic and left to drift off to a slow, painful end. Barbados police have said the cause of the deaths was starvation and dehydration.

'Please excuse me'

"I would like to send to my family in Bassada [a town in the interior of Senegal] a sum of money. Please excuse me and goodbye. This is the end of my life in this big Moroccan sea," the note said, according to a Barbados paper, the Daily Nation. Relatives of those aboard have been contacting the Barbadian authorities from as far afield as Senegal, Spain and Portugal. They have added pieces to the puzzle - based on telephone calls with relatives before they boarded, and with people who stayed in contact with the boat during the first stage of the voyage.

The story of the 11 dead and some 40 other would-be immigrants from Guinea Bissau, Senegal and Gambia starts on Christmas Day last year at Praia, a port in the former Portuguese colony of Cape Verde. There, for €1,300 (£890) each, they were promised a trip to the Canary Islands by a mysterious Spaniard.

Their boat was to be a motorised yacht, recently repaired but bearing no name and no flag. They paid to make the voyage, assuming that the Spaniard - a mechanic based in the Canaries - would be skippering the boat. At the last moment, however, a Senegalese man took over and the Spaniard disappeared. Several then refused to make the journey. One, according to the El Pais newspaper yesterday, jumped from the yacht as it set sail. It is by no means clear what happened next.

Somewhere near the Mauritanian port of Nouadhibou the yacht ran into trouble. Another boat was sent to its aid, apparently after the skipper had contacted the Spaniard. The yacht was towed but, at some stage, the line was severed. El Pais reported that it had been hacked with a machete. With no fuel left and food and water running out, the migrants' fate was left in the hands of the sea, the weather, and luck. The latter soon ran out.

The yacht drifted into the stormy Atlantic and, it is assumed, people were tossed or washed overboard as they died.

The 11 last survivors, huddled together against the elements, were reported to have died by the end of January. At that stage their yacht became a ghost ship, battered by storms or winds until it appeared, 2,800 miles away, on the other side of the Atlantic. A Barbados fishing boat was the first to sight it on April 29, 135 days after it had set sail. The coastguard vessel HMBS Trident was sent to discover its awful secrets.

Anxious phone calls from relatives to the Daily Nation have turned up some of the names of those on the boat. They include a Gambian, Bouba Cisse, whose cousin Abdou Karime, now in Portugal, saw the case reported on TV. "We've been watching it [the story of the 11 bodies found] on Spanish TV and a lot of family members I know would have wished for the bodies discovered to be returned to our country," he told the newspaper.

Immigrant route

The 11 bodies now in a Barbados morgue, along with those presumed dead, add to a growing death toll on the newest immigrant route into Europe from Africa.

This route, from the west African coast to Cape Verde, opened up late last year. By March Spanish authorities claimed more than 1,000 had drowned.

That has not stopped the flow. Three vessels carrying 188 African migrants reached Tenerife yesterday. The number of immigrants to have reached the Canaries this year is close to 7,000.

Interpol, meanwhile, has asked police around the world to locate the mysterious Spaniard who took some €50,000 from the immigrants before they sailed to their death.

Last letter

I am from Senegal but have been living in Cape Verde for a year. Things are bad. I don't think I will come out of this alive. I need whoever finds me to send this money to my family. Please telephone my friend Ibrahima Drame.

Signed Diaw Sounkar Diemi.

El Pais's account of note found on boat

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This gargantuan, mono-horned, foul smelling, reptilian beast is reputed to lurk in the depths of Nebraska's famed Alkali Lake, devouring all who come near it.

Located in central Nebraska, Walgren Lake (formerly known as Alkali Lake) is an eroded volcanic outcropping that is reputed to be the nesting place of one of the most unusual LAKE MONSTERS ever recorded and, if the legends are true, the habitat of the only aquatic monster ever reported in the state of Nebraska.

Originally chronicled in Native American folklore, this creature has been described as a gargantuan alligator-like beast with some unique attributes. Eyewitnesses claim that the beast is approximately 40-feet long, with rough, grayish-brown skin and a horny outgrowth located between its eyes and nostrils.

The first confirmed report of this curious monstrosity comes to us from the Omaha World Herald, dated 1923. In this report, a man named J.A. Johnson claimed that he and two friends had seen the creature while camping on the shores of Lake Alkali. Viewing the creature from a distance of a mere 60-feet, their testimony confirms that the animal's features did resemble those of an alligator – complete with a rhinoceros-like horn – but that the creature in question was much longer and heavier than any traditional specimen of "Alligatoridae." According to Johnson's own account:

"I saw the monster myself while with two friends last fall. I could name forty other people who have also seen the brute." Johnson went on to state that this creature had been responsible for local livestock losses.

The trio also claimed that as soon as the animal noticed their presence on shore, it emitted a "dreadful roar" and began to thrash its tail – creating a massive splash – before disappearing beneath the lake's churning surface.

The American Monsters research team could uncover no modern encounters with this beast, which remains one of the most fascinating lake monsters in the continental United States.

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site by: Marc Storrs

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Amelia Earhart Plane Fragment Identified

7

Rossella Lorenzi – Discovery News

Filed to: secret history

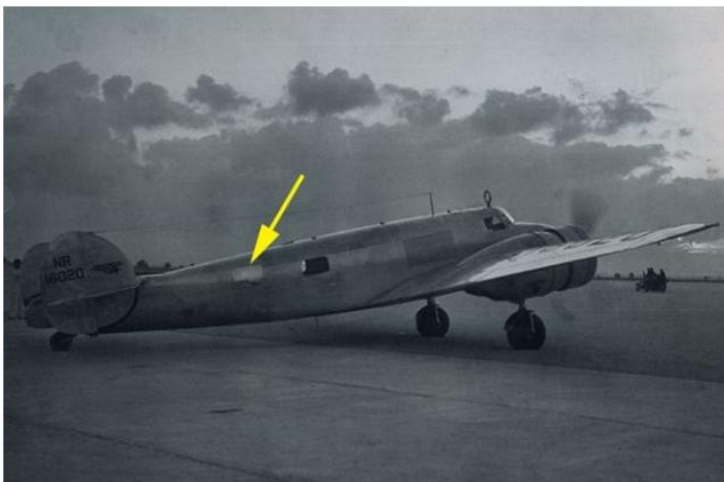
Today 3:30pm



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A fragment of Amelia Earhart's lost aircraft has been identified to a high degree of certainty for the first time ever since her plane vanished over the Pacific Ocean on July 2, 1937, in a record attempt to fly around the world at the equator.

New research strongly suggests that a piece of aluminum aircraft debris recovered in 1991 from Nikumaroro, an uninhabited atoll in the southwestern Pacific republic of Kiribati, does belong to Earhart's twin-engined Lockheed Electra.



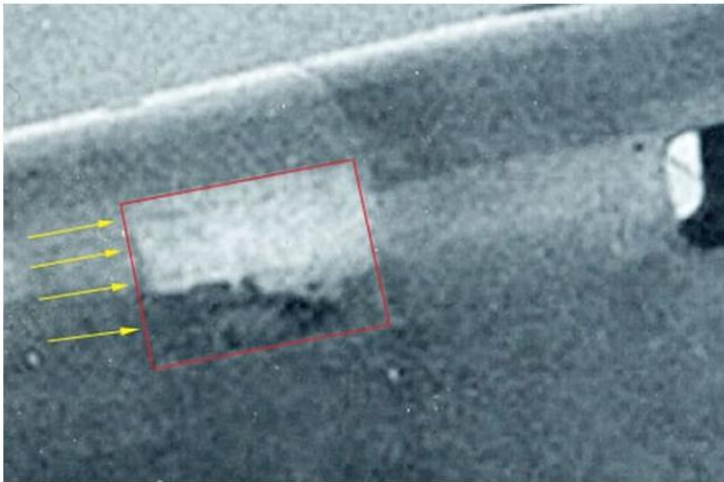
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According to researchers at The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery (TIGHAR), which has long been investigating the last, fateful flight taken by Earhart 77 years ago, the aluminum sheet is a patch of metal installed on the Electra during the aviator's eight-day stay in Miami, which was the fourth stop on her attempt to circumnavigate the globe. (The patch replaced a navigational window.

Above, a Miami Herald photo shows the Electra departing for San Juan, Puerto Rico on the morning of Tuesday, June 1, 1937 with a shiny patch of metal where the window had been.

Below, forensic imaging of photos of the patch show that its borders were roughly the same as the window frame it replaced.)

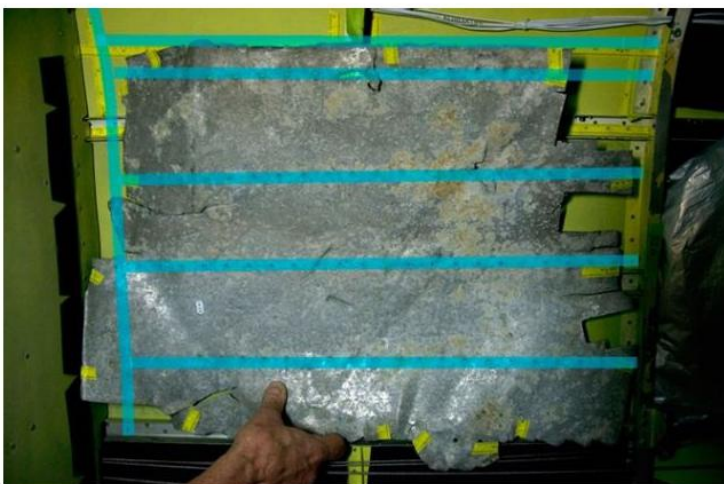
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"The Miami Patch was an expedient field repair," Ric Gillespie, executive director of TIGHAR, told Discovery News. "Its complex fingerprint of dimensions, proportions, materials and rivet patterns was as unique to Earhart's Electra as a fingerprint is to an individual."

TIGHAR researchers went to Wichita Air Services in Newton, Kans., and compared the dimensions and features of the Artifact 2-2-V-1, as the metal

sheet found on Nikumaroro was called, with the structural components of a Lockheed Electra being restored to airworthy condition:



Expand

The rivet pattern and other features on the 19-inch-wide by 23-inch-long Nikumaroro artifact matched the patch and lined up with the structural components of the Lockheed Electra. TIGHAR detailed the finding in a report on its website.

Photos: Clues Pointing to Amelia Earhart's Plane

"This is the first time an artifact found on Nikumaroro has been shown to have a direct link to Amelia Earhart," Gillespie said.

The breakthrough would prove that, contrary to what was generally believed, Earhart and her navigator, Fred Noonan, did not crash in the Pacific Ocean, running out of fuel somewhere near their target destination of Howland Island.

Instead, they made a forced landing on Nikumaroro's smooth, flat coral reef. The two became castaways and eventually died on the atoll, which is some 350 miles southeast of Howland Island.

In 10 archaeological expeditions to Nikumaroro, Gillespie and his team uncovered a number of artifacts which, combined with archival research, provide strong circumstantial evidence for a castaway presence.

"Earhart sent radio distress calls for at least five nights before the Electra was washed into the ocean by rising tides and surf," Gillespie said.

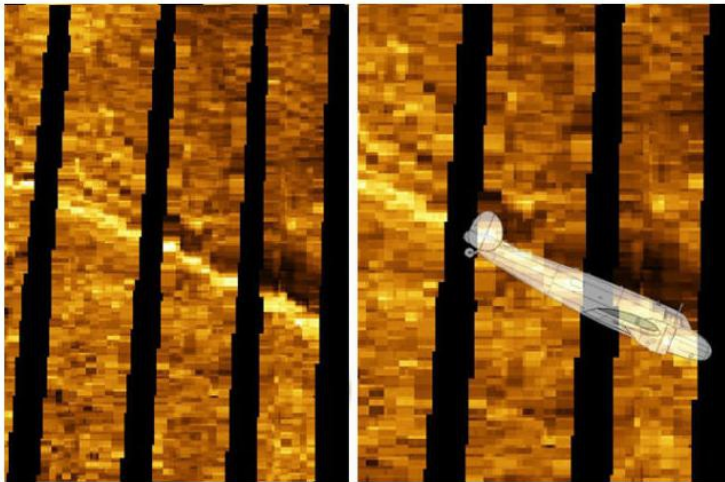
Previous research on a photograph of Nikumaroro's western shoreline taken three months

after Earhart's disappearance revealed an unexplained object protruding from the water on the fringing reef.

Photos: Jars Hint at Amelia Earhart as Castaway

Forensic imaging analyses of the photo suggested that the shape and dimension of the object are consistent with the landing gear of a Lockheed Electra.

Moreover, an "anomaly" that might possibly be the wreckage of Amelia Earhart's aircraft emerged from analysis of the sonar imagery captured off Nikumaroro during TIGHAR's last expedition:



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The object rests at a depth of 600 feet at the base of a cliff just offshore where, according to TIGHAR, the Electra was washed into the ocean. An analysis of the anomaly by Ocean Imaging Consultants, Inc. of Honolulu, experts in post-processing sonar data, revealed the anomaly to be the right size and shape to be the fuselage of Earhart's aircraft.

The new research on Artifact 2-2-V-1 may reinforce the possibility that the anomaly is the rest of the aircraft.

Photos: Inside the Search for Amelia Earhart

"The many fractures, tears, dents and gouges found on this battered sheet of aluminum may be important clues to the fate and resting place of the Electra," Gillespie said.

In June 2015, TIGHAR will return to Nikumaroro to investigate the anomaly with Remote Operated Vehicle (ROV) technology supported by Nai'a, a 120-foot Fiji-based vessel that has served five previous TIGHAR explorations.

During the 24-day expedition, divers will search for other wreckage at shallower depths and an onshore search team will seek to identify objects detected in historical photographs that may be relics of an initial survival camp.

"Funding is being sought, in part, from individuals who will make a substantial contribution in return for a place on the expedition team," Gillespie said.

AshaLil **AshaLil**

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Today 3:51pm

Is it wrong of me to say that we should give up on this search? The reality is that she is dead. The overall theory that makes sense is that she went off course and had to crash the plane into the ocean makes sense, probably kill herself in the process, and that plane is either almost completely corroded away or buried on the sea floor.

[Double_W](#) **Double_W**

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Today 3:54pm

We shouldn't give up searching, but we should stop listening to TIGHAR, which has been peddling this BS for years. I'm getting so sick of news reports about this that don't bother to talk to any actual experts about the crazy this group puts out.

[Mastiff-](#) **Mastiff**

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Today 4:17pm

I'm pretty sure it was too late for finding survivors when they finally found the *Titanic*, but it was still pretty interesting.

Besides, there's no "we" involved. It's just people who are interested in this sort of thing, do what they love to do.

[FunkyJ](#) **FunkyJ**

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Today 5:15pm

That's like saying your grandparents are dead, so you shouldn't ever think about them or wonder about their lives...

The past is fascinating, and holds the answers to our future.

Discovering how and where she crashed, and especially if she managed to survive, will give us insights which are useful for modern air travel.

[AshaLil](#) **AshaLil**

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Today 5:19pm

Except I'm not trying to find their remains, especially when the chances have become appallingly unlikely. This is a search that has been going on for an incredibly long time with no real results. There are an untold number of planes that went down in that region in the last 80 years. This could easily be any of them.

This holds no answer to our future, unless you plan on going back in time to before she was lost . . . though that would still be the past, technically speaking.

Finding the remains of an aircraft that crashed when my grandfather was a teenager is going to tell us NOTHING insightful for modern air travel.

3TS, Host3TS
Today 3:51pm

:(

I always thought she was a time lord.

[sTalkinggoat](#) **sTalkinggoat**

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Today 4:14pm

This doesn't rule that out. Plus a penchant for scarves and a companion all but confirms it.

Leading AE theory: Time Lord.

[unitedshoes](#) **BOO-nitedShoes**

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Today 5:11pm

The TARDIS commanded by the Time Lady known as The Pilot often used its chameleon circuit to disguise itself as popular personal aircraft of the time and place she was visiting. That she flew without the TARDIS' crew of six was less an exercise in bravado and desperation like that of The Doctor, but merely an expression of competence; five other pilots would have gotten in her way...

[Double_W](#) **Double_W**

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Double_WRossella Lorenzi – Discovery News
Today 3:49pm

ARRRGHHH! TIGHAR is still spreading this nonsense! And gullible journalists keep falling for it. They've been doing this for years — every piece of trash they find is evidence for their

crazy conspiracy, which no historians buy. Seriously reporters: Talk to some damn historians or actual experts about Earhart for their views about what TIGHAR does. Here's a starting point: (Sorry. Earlier link isn't working. Trying this one instead: <http://bit.ly/1FWIOR1>)

BaldwinTheLesser **BaldwinTheLesser**

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BaldwinTheLesserDouble_W

Today 4:05pm

Well, over the last few rounds of exasperated "LOOGIT WE FOUND AMELIA EARHART ZOMG" to come out of TIGHAR, my question is, why haven't they dived on the site where they say they found the fuselage? It's always some nonsense about a piece of glass from a jar of lip balm or some shit, why not just dive the fucking site already? Seems like something higher on the priority list than whatever the hell they're always trying to secure funding for.

sTalkinggoat **sTalkinggoat**

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Today 4:16pm

Weren't they just claiming that a face cream bottle they found was hers because she had freckles.?

BaldwinTheLesser **BaldwinTheLesser**

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BaldwinTheLessersTalkinggoat

Today 4:18pm

Yes.

IraeNicole **Scary Nicole**

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Scary NicoleRossella Lorenzi – Discovery News

Today 3:42pm

Yey a mystery maybe solved. Note to self: Etch initials into every single piece of plane if I attempt to fly around world and might disappear.

Visitors often mention the island's oppressive equatorial heat, razor-sharp coral, dense foliage and aggressive coconut crabs.

Going to imagine she had a nice life on the island and they built a Swiss Family Robinson style tree house.

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Today 5:36pm

I thought her plane was found in the Delta Quadrant in the Star Trek Voyager episode The 37's?



rest in peace.

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mwhite66 mwhite66

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mwhite66Rossella Lorenzi – Discovery News

Today 6:08pm

Earhart was a mediocre pilot at best, lacking basic flying and navigation skills. She was in the publicity and endorsement business, tried a crazy-dangerous stunt, got lost, ran out of gas, ditched and died. Let's give it up and let her



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American Red Cross and Roanoke Ballet Theatre partner to promote blood donation

wdbj7.com

POSTED: 05:45 PM EDT Oct 11, 2014 UPDATED: 11:32 PM EDT Oct 11, 2014

that way. Dracula is probably best known for drinking blood. But today, in downtown Roanoke, he was promoting blood donations. a flash mob featuring the vampire and his bride was held in Market Square. People that got Dracula cards and promised to donate blood by October 23-rd were entered to win two tickets to the Roanoke Ballet Theatre's one-night show featuring him. Lisa Thompson/ Red Cross, Regional Director of Public Affairs: "Th Ballet reached out to us with a great idea of how to incorporate what they're doing with Dracula, this is their first time to do this production, and how we could enhance the public's awareness that we always need blood donation." The Red Cross and the Ballet Theatre will continue to promote the production in the coming weeks. Next on

Dracula is probably best known for drinking blood, but Saturday, in downtown Roanoke, he was promoting blood donation.

A flash mob featuring the vampire and his brides was held in Market Square.

People who were given Dracula cards and donate blood with the Red Cross until October 23rd are entered to win two tickets to the Roanoke Ballet Theatre's one-night show on November 1st.

The Red Cross and the Ballet Theatre will be doing additional events to promote "Dracula" in the coming weeks.

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Elizabeth Chapman Daughter of Nathaniel Chapman and
Elizabeth Chapman born at Leominster December 8th 1770
John Chapman Son of Nathaniel and Elizabeth Chapman
born at Leominster September 26th 1771
Nathaniel Chapman Son of Nath^l & Elizabeth Chapman born
at Leominster June 26th 1776



A TRUE COPY ATTEST

Georly J. Davis
City Clerk
City of Leominster

Archaeologists uncover vampire graves in Bulgaria

10:53 EST, 9 October 2014 |

10:53 EST, 9 October 2014

dailymail.co.uk

Archaeologists have unearthed what they believe to be a vampire burial site in Bulgaria.

The so-called 'vampire graves' contain skeletons which all have an iron rod impaled through their bodies where their heart would have been.

The discovery, made at the ancient temple of Perperion, south-east of the Bulgarian capital Sofia, is further evidence that people really did believe that vampires could rise from the dead if they were not buried properly.



Vampire graves: Archaeologists have unearthed what they believe to be a vampire burial site in Bulgaria



Dracula? The so-called 'vampire graves' contain skeletons which all have an iron rod impaled through their bodies where their heart would have been



Out for the Count: Scores of people were killed because they were thought to be vampires, similar to witch-hunts elsewhere in Europe and North America

In the 13th and 14th centuries, many Eastern Europeans held the belief that vampires were real, causing mass hysteria when people suspected someone of being one of the blood-sucking creatures.

Scores of people were killed because they were thought to be vampires, similar to witch-hunts elsewhere in Europe and North America.

However it may be possible that some towns had a ritual of hammering a stake into dead

people's hearts to make sure they did not join the undead, even if there was no suspicion of them being a vampire.

The skeletons were found by 'Bulgaria's Indiana Jones', Professor Nikolai Ovcharov.

Last year his team found a 35-40-year-old male with a metal pole impaled through where his heart would have been at a nearby site.

Before that Professor Ovcharov had found 700-year-old corpses 'nailed to the ground with iron staples driven into the limbs'.



Burial ritual: The technique of impaling a stake through the heart was believed to be the best method for killing a vampire

Hard at work: The skeletons were found by 'Bulgaria's Indiana Jones', Prof Nikolai Ovcharov, and his team

The site: This week's discoveries are the sixth and seventh vampires dug up in just two years in Bulgaria

John Van Eyssen, in the film *Horror of Dracula*, prepares to drive a wooden stake through the heart of vampire



The year before that, a group headed by the professor unearthed another 700-year-old skeleton of a man pinned down in his earth in a church in the Black Sea town of Sozopol.

This week's discoveries are the sixth and seventh vampires dug up in just two years in Bulgaria.

However, the phenomenon is not just Bulgarian. Last year Polish archaeologists unearthed four 'vampire graves' where the bodies had their heads removed and placed between their legs.

The discoveries near the southern town of Gliwice showed that different towns believed in different methods for killing vampires.

EUROPE'S FEAR OF BLOOD-SUCKING VAMPIRES IN THE MIDDLE AGES

The belief in vampires was widespread throughout Bulgaria and other parts of central Europe throughout the Middle Ages.



The word vampire is derived from the original Slavic term 'opyrb' or 'opir' which later appears as 'vipir', 'vepir', or 'vampir'.

Drunkards, thieves and murderers were all believed to be

likely candidates to become vampires.



Appearing completely normal, they would arrive at a town and live amongst the people often even marrying and fathering children. But at night they would wander the countryside in search of blood.

These types of vampires could be destroyed with a stake through the heart.

One account maintains that a vampire was the soul of an outlaw who died in the mountains or forest or along a country road, and whose corpse is eaten by crows, wolves, or some

other such scavengers.

Because such a soul is not permitted to enter heaven or hell it remains on earth haunting the place where he was killed strangling and drinking the blood of anyone who comes by.

Another account states a person who died a violent, unnatural death or whose corpse was jumped over by a cat before burial, can become a vampire.

In such cases during the first 40 days after burial, the bones turn to gelatin and the vampire performs mischief at night - releasing animals from their pens, scattering house hold items, and suffocating people.

During the first forty days it can be destroyed by a 'Vampiridzhija' - a professional vampire hunter capable of seeing them - or alternatively devoured by a wolf.

However if not destroyed in this time period the Vampire would develop a skeleton and become even more fierce.

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Posted on Sunday, 7 September, 2014 | 6 comments

Columnist: Peter Fotis Kapnistos

“They have long been famed for their love of lavish banquets and rich recipes. But what is less well known is that the British royals also had a taste for human flesh.” Two 2011 books on medicinal cannibalism (or blood medicine) have revealed that British royalty routinely swallowed parts of the human body.

One of the authors, Dr Richard Sugg at Durham University, added that this was not a practice reserved for monarchs but was widespread among the well-to-do in Europe:

“One thing we are rarely taught at school yet is evidenced in literary and historic texts of the time is this: James I refused corpse medicine; Charles II made his own corpse medicine; and Charles I was made into corpse medicine.”

“Along with Charles II, eminent users or prescribers included Francis I, Elizabeth I’s surgeon John Banister, Elizabeth Grey, Countess of Kent, Robert Boyle, Thomas Willis, William III, and Queen Mary.” (Fiona Macrae, “British royalty dined on human flesh,” Daily Mail, May 20, 2011)

While corpse medicine has been presented as a medieval therapy, it was at its height in the social and scientific revolutions of early-modern Britain (up to the 20th century).

“Some way into the 19th century, crowds still jostled beneath the execution scaffold in parts of Denmark, cups raised to catch the precious drops of warm blood as it spilled from the dying body of the felon above. These people were hoping to cure their epilepsy. Their belief ran back almost 2000 years, to the Rome of the physician Celsus, where patients would gain this quintessential fluid from the bodies of wounded gladiators.”

The use of cannibalistic blood medicine was “corpse pharmacology,” but health-giving vampirism was by no means limited to folk medicine. “There were few vocal opponents of the practice, even though cannibalism in the newly explored Americas was reviled as a mark of savagery. Mummies were stolen from Egyptian tombs, and skulls were taken from Irish burial sites. Gravediggers robbed and sold body parts.”

Both Queen Mary II and her uncle King Charles II took distilled human skull on their deathbeds in 1698 and 1685 respectively, according to Dr Sugg.

“The Italian Renaissance scholar, Marsilio Ficino (himself the son of a physician) had recommended that human blood could act not just as a specific curative, but as a kind of elixir

of life. The elderly might, he suggested, restore their vitality by sucking directly from a vein in the arm of some healthy youth. Towards the end of the 17th century, we find a Franciscan monk making a kind of jam or marmalade from human blood ('stir it to a batter with a knife... pound it...through a sieve of finest silk').” (Richard Sugg, “Corpse medicine: mummies, cannibals, and vampires,” *The Lancet*, June 21, 2008)

(Lecturer at the University of New England) Louise Noble’s book, “Medicinal Cannibalism in Early Modern English Literature and Culture,” and the book by Richard Sugg (of the University of Durham), “Mummies, Cannibals and Vampires: The History of Corpse Medicine from the Renaissance to the Victorians,” both reveal that “for several hundred years, peaking in the 16th and 17th centuries, many Europeans, including royalty, priests and scientists, routinely ingested remedies containing human bones, blood and fat as medicine for everything from headaches to epilepsy.”

“Even as they denounced the barbaric cannibals of the New World, they applied, drank, or wore powdered Egyptian mummy, human fat, flesh, bone, blood, brains and skin.”

“As science strode forward, however, cannibal remedies died out. The practice dwindled in the 18th century, around the time Europeans began regularly using forks for eating and soap for bathing. But Sugg found some late examples of corpse medicine: In 1847, an Englishman was advised to mix the skull of a young woman with treacle (molasses) and feed it to his daughter to cure her epilepsy. (He obtained the compound and administered it, as Sugg writes, but ‘allegedly without effect.’) A belief that a magical candle made from human fat, called a ‘thieves candle,’ could stupefy and paralyze a person lasted into the 1880s. Mummy was sold as medicine in a German medical catalog at the beginning of the 20th century. And in 1908, a last known attempt was made in Germany to swallow blood at the scaffold.” (Maria Dolan, “The Gruesome History of Eating Corpses as Medicine: The question was not ‘Should you eat human flesh?’ says one historian, but, ‘What sort of flesh should you eat?’” *Smithsonian*, May 7, 2012)

In August 2012, the University of Leicester began a search for the remains of King Richard III of England. In September the excavators announced that they had found a human skeleton beneath a Leicester parking lot. On February 4, 2013, the University confirmed that the skeleton was beyond a doubt that of King Richard. This proof was based on mitochondrial DNA evidence.

“While digging up the bones of Richard III, who was born in 1452 and ruled England from 1483 to 1485, scientists took soil samples from within the grave. They then looked for evidence of parasites in order to better understand his health and diet. Within the soil where the king’s pelvis once rested, they found a large number of ancient eggs from roundworms (*Ascaris lumbricoides*). As a control, they also took a soil sample from inside Richard III’s skull and from the grave outside the bounds of the body. They found no eggs in the skull sample, and only a small number — 15 times fewer eggs — in that soil, suggesting a background level of contamination from sewage, said Piers Mitchell, a physician and biological anthropologist at the University of Cambridge.”

“‘I would say this is 100 percent proof that he had a roundworm infection,’ because there ‘is

no other explanation' for the large amount of roundworms found where his intestines once lay, Mitchell told LiveScience. A study detailing the finding was published in the journal *The Lancet*." (Douglas Main, "Richard III Had Roundworm Infection, New Study Of King's Skeleton Suggests," LiveScience, September 4, 2013)

It's unclear how much the parasite "wurm" illness may have affected King Richard, who was said to be an unfeeling and power-hungry man, Mitchell said. Were British royals perhaps the guinea pigs of careless physicians trying to create a "master race monarchy" with their cannibal remedies?

In 2011, the Romanian tourist board released a video of the Prince of Wales (Prince Charles) publicly claiming that he is a descendant of Vlad the Impaler or Vlad Tepes, more popularly known as Count Dracula. (The name of the vampire Count Dracula is from Bram Stoker's novel.)

"The Prince himself appears in a video being used to promote the country in which he claims distant kinship with Vlad Tepes, the 15th-century Wallachian ruler on whom the Irish novelist Bram Stoker based his Dracula.

"'Transylvania is in my blood,' he jokes in an interview first shown on satellite television last year. 'The genealogy shows I am descended from Vlad the Impaler, so I do have a bit of a stake in the country.'" (Victoria Ward and Andrew Hough, "Prince Charles, heir to Dracula's blood line," *The Telegraph*, November 5, 2012)

"Prince Vlad, or as he was called even in his own time, Dracula (which means 'Son of the Dragon') tops the list of Romania's many, many Christian crusaders who, in the transition years between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, fought to keep the Muslim-faithed Ottoman Turks out of their country."

"Still, Dracula was not a saint. He ruled his military kingdom of Wallachia — southern Romania — with a heavy and blood-soaked fist. To not only the Turks but also to many of his own countrymen he was Vlad The Impaler, Vlad Die Tepes (pronounced Tee-pish). Determined not to be overtaken by the intrigue of an intriguing political underhandedness, in a world in which princes fell daily to smiling, hypocritical 'allies,' paranoia among the aristocracy was, and probably needed to be, utmost in a sovereign's disposition. Dracula built a defense around him that dared not open kindness nor trust to anyone. During his tenure, he killed by the droves, impaling on a forest of spikes around his castle thousands of subjects who he saw as either traitors, would-be traitors or enemies to the security of Romania and the Roman Catholic Church. Sometimes, he slew merely to show other possible insurgents and criminals just what their fate would be if they became troublesome." (Joseph Geringer, "Vlad the Impaler," crimelibrary.com)

In the 1890s, Irish author Bram Stoker became acquainted with the occult-like spiritualist organization called the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. "Stoker has mistakenly been called a member, but he did seem to be friends with a few of the members." E.A. Wallis Budge was curator of the British Museum, and co-founder William Wynn Wescott was the London Postmaster.

Aleister Crowley was initiated into the Order of the Golden Dawn in 1898 by Samuel Liddell MacGregor Mathers and climbed up rapidly through the grades. But in 1900, division shattered the Order when some top members, including poet W. B. Yeats, became annoyed with Mathers' leadership, as well as his growing comradeship with Aleister Crowley. In response, a general meeting was called in London to remove Mathers as chief and to expel Mathers and Crowley from the Order.

"Dracula" is Bram Stoker's 1897 gothic horror novel, well known for introducing the character of the Transylvanian Count Dracula. The noble is a vampire who buys a house in London and begins a reign of seduction and terror.

Bela Lugosi was cinema's first official Count Dracula (1931). An earlier adaptation of Bram Stoker's Dracula was the silent movie, "Nosferatu," released in 1922, starring Max Schreck as the vampire. "Nosferatu the Vampyre" was a 1979 West German vampire horror film by Werner Herzog, with Klaus Kinski as Count Dracula.

Christopher Lee was also recognized for his role as Count Dracula in a series of imitative horror films in the 1960s. Francis Ford Coppola directed an elegant revision of Dracula in 1992 with Gary Oldman, Winona Ryder and Anthony Hopkins.

Anne Rice is an American author of metaphysical gothic fiction, best known for her popular series of novels starting in 1976, "The Vampire Chronicles." The 2010 Spanish film "La Herencia Valdemar" (The Valdemar Inheritance) is a gothic Lovecraftian movie with Bram Stoker and Aleister Crowley as characters.

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October 16, 2014 10:51 PM

SYDNEY (Reuters) - An Australian man had a spider removed from his stomach after it burrowed its way into his body and survived for three days before being removed.

Dylan Maxwell was on holidays on the Indonesian island of Bali when the tiny creature burrowed through a small appendix scar and traveled up his torso, leaving a red scar-like trail from his navel to his chest.

Lifting his shirt, Maxwell told an Australian television network "that's where it actually burrowed underneath my skin".

While still in Bali, Maxwell visited a local medical center and was prescribed an antihistamine for an insect bite.

"Well after running tests and putting things inside my stomach they finally found out it was a tropical spider that's been living inside me for the last three days," Maxwell posted on his Facebook page where he goes by the name of Dylan Thomas.

"Haven't felt so violated in my life before! Just glad it's all over", he said.

After returning to Australia earlier this week, doctors removed the tropical visitor.

"They managed to pull the spider out of my navel and put it in a specimen jar and took it away," said Maxwell, whose mates have nicknamed him "Spiderman".

(This story fixes typographical errors in the second and third paragraphs)

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Last updated at 07:04 ET



Terri-Jean Bedford

Terri-Jean Bedford testified in the Senate last month in head-to-toe leather, complete with riding crop

A former dominatrix has been honoured by a Canadian civil liberties group, after successfully campaigning to overturn the country's prostitution laws.

Terri-Jean Bedford, who once ran a "bondage dungeon", will

be presented with the Ontario Civil Liberties Award in November, the Canada.com news website reports. She was one of three women who challenged Canada's anti-prostitution laws in court, leading to a unanimous Supreme Court ruling in December 2013 striking down the laws as unconstitutional. The court said that parliament could regulate against nuisances, "but not at the cost of the health, safety and lives of prostitutes... It is not a crime in Canada to sell sex for money." It has given parliament one year to come up with new prostitution laws.

"Miss Bedford has fought for the freedom, dignity, and safety of sex workers in Canada," the Ontario Civil Liberties Association says in a statement on its website. "She has opposed the unjust laws affecting her profession in court, in the streets, in the Senate, in the press, and in her writings. She has even been to jail under these laws," it says. Dubbed "Canada's most famous dominatrix", Ms Bedford says she wants to be remembered for "standing against secret rules. My motto is that I'll fight for my rights, whether you like it or not."

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The growing problem of Pablo Escobar's hippos

25 June 2014

bbc.com



A herd of hippopotamuses once owned by the late Colombian drug baron Pablo Escobar has been taking over the countryside near his former ranch - and no-one quite knows what to do with them.

It was in 2007, 14 years after Escobar's death, that people in rural Antioquia, 200 miles north-west of Bogota, began phoning the Ministry of Environment to report sightings of a peculiar animal.

"They found a creature in a river that they had never seen before, with small ears and a really big mouth," recalls Carlos Valderrama, from the charity Webconserva.

He went to look, and found himself faced with the task of explaining to startled villagers that this was an animal from Africa.

A hippopotamus.

"The fishermen, they were all saying, 'How come there's a hippo here?'" he recalls. "We started asking around and of course they were all coming from Hacienda Napoles. Everything happened because of the whim of a villain."

"Start Quote

It's just like this crazy wildlife experiment that we're left with"

Situated halfway between the city of Medellin and Bogota, the Colombian capital, Hacienda Napoles was the vast ranch owned by the drugs baron Pablo Escobar. In the early 1980s, after Escobar had become rich but before he had started the campaign of assassinations and bombings that was to almost tear Colombia apart, he built himself a zoo.

He smuggled in elephants, giraffes and other exotic animals, among them four hippos - three females and one male. And with a typically grand gesture, he allowed the public to wander freely around the zoo. Buses filled with schoolchildren passed under a replica of the propeller plane that carried Escobar's first US-bound shipments of cocaine.

While Don Pablo masterminded the operations of the Medellin Cartel from his villa on the hill, the locals gazed at the strange animals and even stranger concrete dinosaurs that Escobar built for his son.

When Hacienda Napoles was confiscated in the early 1990s, Escobar's menagerie was dispersed to zoos around the country. But not the hippos. For about two decades, they have wallowed in their soupy lake, watching the 20sq km (8 sq mile) park around them become neglected and overgrown - and then transformed back into a zoo and theme park, complete with water slides. All the while, the hippos themselves thrived, and multiplied.



"Start Quote

There are people saying, 'Oh why do you have to castrate them? Just let them be - castrate the politicians'"

Nobody knows how many there are. The local environmental authority, which bears responsibility for them, estimates between 50 and 60,

with most living in the lake at the park. But 12 are known to have paddled past the flimsy fence and into the nearby Magdalena River - and maybe many more.

Here, conditions for hippos are idyllic. The river is slow moving and has plenty of shallows, perfect for larger animals which don't actually swim but push themselves off banks, gliding through the water. Moreover, the region never experiences drought, which tends to act as a natural brake on the size of herds in Africa.

How much the hippos like Colombia can be judged from how much sex they are having. In Africa they usually become sexually active between the ages of seven and nine for males, and nine and 11 for females, but Pablo Escobar's hippos are becoming sexually active as young as three. All the fertile females are reported to be giving birth to a calf every year.



Carlos Valderrama may be the only vet to have castrated a hippo in the wild

"It's just like this crazy wildlife experiment that we're left with," says San Diego University ecologist Rebecca Lewison. "Gosh! I hope this goes well."

Valderrama, whose job until recently included watching

over the hippos in the Magdalena, has seen animals up to 250km (155 miles) away from Hacienda Napoles. Fishermen are terrified of the three-tonne herbivores, he says. At night, the animals roam the countryside, wandering into ranches, eating crops and occasionally crushing small cows.

Colombian people, he believes, are more vulnerable than Africans because they see hippos as cuddly, "floppy" animals. The respected El Colombiano newspaper recently reported that children in a school near Hacienda Napoles are sharing a pond with the animals, and having

direct contact with hippo calves at home.

"My father brought a little one home once," an unnamed girl told the paper. "I called him Luna (Moon) because he was very sweet - we fed him with just milk." Another child, a boy, told the paper: "My father has captured three. It is nice because you have a little animal at home. We bottle-feed them because they only drink milk. They have a very slippery skin, you pour water and they produce a kind of slime, you touch them and it's like soap."

The Old Man



One hippo is to blame for the move upriver. Hippos live in harems. The alpha male at the Hacienda is known as El Viejo - The Old Man - and he is very powerful, gaping his massive jaws at younger males when they approach any of the females in the herd. These frustrated Lotharios have no option but to leave and try to form their own herds elsewhere. All the keepers can do is try to keep the hippos near the lake with a free dinner, made up of around 350kg of sugar cane,

tall grass and vegetables.

But adult hippos are dangerous. Despite their ungainly appearance, they are very agile in the water and can charge on land at up to 18 mph (29km/h). It's often said that hippos are responsible for more human deaths in Africa than any other animal - though it may be more accurate to say they cause more deaths than any other wild mammal.

Attacks happen when humans encroach on hippo territory, says Lewison. But the animals aren't like crocodiles, she points out - they don't see a thing and instinctively want to kill it - so in a sparsely populated area it may be safe to let Escobar's hippos be. In the 30-year history of Escobar's herd, there have been no reports of anyone being killed or even seriously injured. But living near the animals is inevitably a risk, Lewison says - one that local people have to decide whether they are willing to take.

For Carlos Valderrama, however doing nothing is not an option. "We have seen that hippos are very territorial and very aggressive," he says. "They are not a tame animal. The risk for local populations to just leave them to browse around will be huge."

The ideal solution would be to relocate them, he says. But it's not easy to move a hippo, and even if the government were to kit out teams of experienced vets with trucks and helicopters, there's nowhere to put the animals. They can't be returned to Africa because there is a risk that they carry diseases. That leaves captivity. A handful of hippo calves have been transferred to zoos in Colombia, but there are currently no takers for the adults.

Beyond that, options are limited.



Escobar's house and pool, photographed in 2004

Some - including those at the Hacienda Napoles park - favour containing the numbers with a programme of castration. But not only would this be costly and dangerous for the vets, it's thought many hippos would die. "Hippos are very sensitive to chemical compounds," explains

Lewison. "It doesn't make any sense - they're enormous! - but they have this incredible sensitivity to sedation."

I think they should barbecue them and eat them"

Valderrama also points out that it would be very difficult to ensure that all the males had been attended to, given that no-one knows how many there are - and it only takes one overlooked bull to do the procreation work of a whole herd.

Another idea, favoured by David Echeverri of the local environmental authority, is to build a reserve with proper hippo-proof fences. But it would be a huge challenge to round up all the feral hippos of Antioquia, and would cost an estimated \$500,000 (£290,000).

"It is not going to be accepted in general by environmentalists and biologists here, because Colombia doesn't have a lot of money," says Patricio von Hildebrand, a biologist working in the Amazon region. "They don't think the money should be invested in maintaining a few hippos rather than conserving the original species in Colombia."

Hildebrand has another, more radical solution: "I think they should barbecue them and eat them."

He isn't joking. During experiments with electric fences a while ago, he recalls, someone misjudged the voltage and electrocuted one of the Hacienda Napoles hippos. "What did the local people do? They took him, they chopped him up, they barbecued him and they ate him!" The animal is said to have tasted similar to pork.

Valderrama doesn't recommend eating the meat, in case it is infected with a transmittable disease - one dead hippo was found to be carrying leptospirosis which can cause meningitis - but he does see the complete elimination of male hippos as the most practical solution.

This was also the view of international experts from the World Wildlife Fund and the Disney Foundation, who visited Colombia in 2010 - they described the hippo situation as a "time bomb". But Echeverri can see how this story would play internationally, and wants to avoid it.



"We do not want to choose the easy option and give the world this negative image, not with such a charismatic animal," Echeverri says.

"The country is changing the image it gives the world - we don't want to be in the headlines for such a story."

In 2009, Colombia did make the headlines for hunting down and killing a bull hippo, Pepe, that had been deemed a public nuisance. Even

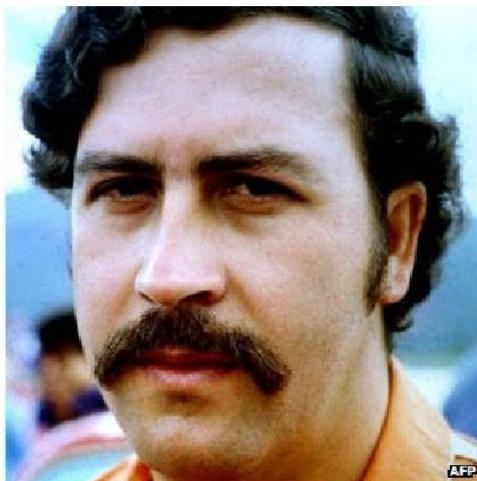
though a professional hunter shot the animal, a group of soldiers had helped to corner it, and a photograph of them posing next to the body caused an outcry.

The hunt for two other hippos, a female, Matilda, and her calf, Hip, had to be called off.

Valderrama, who was astonished at the backlash, calls it "the floppy effect". The reason why nothing has been done about the hippos, he says, is that whatever decision the government makes will be controversial. "They already castrated one, and there are people saying, 'Oh why do you have to castrate them? Just let them be. Castrate the politicians.'"

He believes, however, that Colombians are starting to see beyond the soft side of hippos, and perceive the real risks they pose.

The mixture of feelings in some ways resembles the complex attitude Colombians had towards Pablo Escobar himself.



Pablo Escobar 1949-1993

- In 1989, Forbes magazine ranked Escobar one of the 10 richest people in the world
- The same year, he was responsible for the bombing of Avianca Flight 203, killing 107 people
- In all, Escobar is thought to be responsible for some 4,000 deaths
- His gang targeted politicians, the police and journalists
- After he was arrested in 1991, Escobar was housed in a prison of his own design, nicknamed the Cathedral, where he continued to oversee the Medellin Cartel

Many thousands turned out for his funeral, after he was gunned down on the roof of his safe house in Medellin on 2 December 1993, thanks partly to his good works - he built homes for the poor and paid for football pitches to be floodlit. Yet it is impossible that any resident of Medellin in the early 1990s could have been untouched by the murderous violence that preceded Escobar's death.

In 1989, he came close to derailing Colombia's democratic system when three of the six presidential candidates were assassinated.

Even today a section of poor Colombian society still has fond memories of the bandit, says the Medellin-based travel writer David Lee. He describes a recent trip to Escobar's grave, when he witnessed an old woman approach and begin tapping the headstone - a way for her to make her presence felt wherever Escobar might now be residing.



Most backpackers who make the trip to Hacienda Napoles don't go for the waterslides or the hippos, Lee says, but to take a path that leads from an enclosure containing the park's mascot, Vanessa - a small hippo that responds to her name - up to Escobar's mansion.

It was ravaged by looters after the drug baron's death, but a sign says the house will not be restored because "it's technically difficult and morally impossible".

"Colombians are having a hard time trying to figure out what to do with Escobar's legacy - and that includes his property," says Lee.

The parallels between El Patron and his pets formed a central theme of the 2010 documentary film *Pablo's Hippos* - and the animal was used by Mexican novelist Juan Pablo Villalobos as a metaphor for the absurd, ugly, violent world of the drug baron even before he had heard of Escobar's herd. In his novella *Down the Rabbit Hole*, a seven-year-old boy persuades his drug kingpin father to add a Liberian pygmy hippo to the collection of wild animals kept at their Alice-in-Wonderland palace, including man-eating tigers.

Villalobos regards the real-life runaway hippos as a sort of living, breeding metaphor for Escobar's place in Colombia's national psyche.

"It's like a sign of what's happened in Colombia in the last 20 years," he says. "And this past is still present, and Colombians maybe don't know how to deal with this memory, with Pablo Escobar's heritage.

"All those contradictions are still alive there, and I think now in the most absurd way - in hippos reproducing in a river."

Additional reporting by Arturo Wallace and Lorena Arroyo. Pablo Escobar's hippos were discussed on the Fifth Floor, on the BBC World Service. Listen to the programme again on iPlayer or get the Fifth Floor podcast.

Russian monks make mozzarella

17 October 2014

bbc.com

Last updated at 05:50 ET



Monk at a cheese factory

Monk Agapy enjoys his cheese-making course in Italy

Monks at a remote monastery in northern Russia are launching the production of exquisite types of Italian cheese, it is reported.

One of the brethren has already been to Italy for training, and cheese-making equipment has been purchased, says Valaam, one

of Russia's most famous monasteries.

Monk Agapy spent a week in Italy, where local masters taught him to make such cheeses as mozzarella, caciotta, morlacco, smoked ricotta and bianca, Valaam says on its Facebook page.

A spokesman for the island monastery told the BBC that it expects production to start in December, using milk from cows at its own farm to make the cheeses. The initial plan is for them to be consumed at the monastery, but eventually Valaam hopes to produce up to 350 kg of cheese a week, at which point they will go on sale at less remote religious communities in Russia.

Valaam plays an important role in Russia's religious life and is believed to be favoured by President Vladimir Putin. Italian cheeses are among the Western food imports that were banned by the Russian government in retaliation for economic sanctions against Moscow - over its actions in Ukraine.

Valaam is located on a wooded island 22 km off the shore in Europe's largest

lake, Ladoga.



Monk on a boat

The ancient monastery is seen as a beacon of spirituality by many Orthodox believers.

Use #NewsfromElsewhere to stay up-to-date with our reports via Twitter.



Monk in a forest

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Scandalous tales from the British embassy in Paris

19 October 2014

bbc.com



The exterior of the Hotel de Charost

It's 200 years since the Duke of Wellington bought the grandiose Hotel de Charost in Paris, a few doors down from the Elysee palace. And if you want to get to know the secrets of a stately home, I always say, just ask the butler.

Happily the British embassy in Paris - the sumptuous architectural pearl that is the Hotel de Charost - boasts a

butler who is in every way befitting of his charge.

I say butler, because that's how he's referred to on his business card, but in fact Ben Newick is rather more than that. Head of embassy administration, I guess, would be modern business parlance - except it sounds so grim.

So let us stick with butler, and let us stick with the wonderful Newick as he conducts me around the British ambassador's residence in Paris (not technically the embassy any more because that's next door).

It was built in the 1720s when the Rue de Faubourg Saint-Honore was a winding road that passed through fields and market gardens to the village of Roule.

For our purposes the hotel comes into its own when it's bought in 1803 by the wayward Pauline Borghese, sister of Napoleon, wife of an Italian prince and by all accounts a bit of a wrong 'un.



Pauline Borghese, 1780-1825

In a history of the embassy, we read that at her levees or receptions Borghese liked to walk around naked in order to be admired; a "magnificent black man" carried her into and out of her bath; and if she felt cold, she warmed her feet in the décolletage of a lady-in-waiting lying on the floor.

She can't have been all bad though, because the house as we see it today is basically hers. Much of the furniture - Empire style - is what she acquired, as are the silk damasks on the walls.



Napoleon Bonaparte

In one room, next to a bed that was later slept in by both King Edward VII and the late Queen Mother, there's a stunning framed mirror known as a psyche. I can just

imagine the narcissistic Borghese twisting round to get a rear glimpse of her own stunning frame.

Napoleon himself used to come to the house to have assignations with one of his sister's ladies-in-waiting, a certain Madame de Mathis. He came in by the garden, and they made love somewhere near where the current ambassador and his wife like to take their tea.

Time is too short to describe the beauty of the Hotel de Charost. Suffice to say that in all its wonderful salons, the marbled hall, the ballroom, the state dining room, and the Duff Cooper Library, it combines the elegance of classical French design with the warmth and comfort of the British feel.

In 1814 Borghese left to join her defeated brother on Elba, but before doing so she secured the sale of the hotel to the commander of the British Army the Duke of Wellington.

He paid her in instalments of gold louis, which Pauline loyally passed on to Napoleon - so it can truly be said that the emperor's dramatic comeback that climaxed the next year at Waterloo - was partly financed with British lucre.

Ben Newick (left) with Victoria Beckham at the ambassador's residence

One quirky factoid is that the writer Somerset Maugham was born in an upstairs room.

In the early 1870s, after France had just been defeated by the Prussians, there was talk of a new law imposing French citizenship on anyone born on French soil, in order to secure manpower for the future war of revenge.

Well-connected Brits like Maugham's parents could have babies delivered at the embassy so as to avoid the dreadful fate of being forcibly made French.



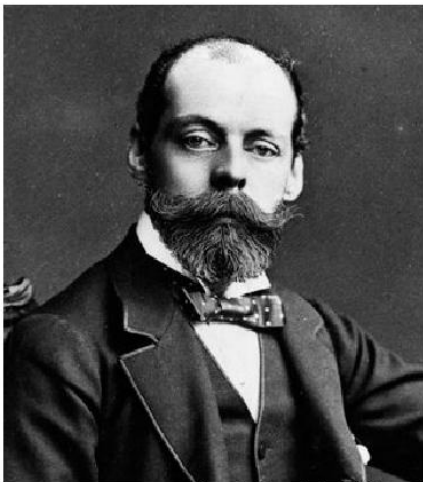
Ben Newick (left) with Victoria Beckham at the ambassador's residence

A few weeks later there was another rite of passage - the American beauty Jennie Jerome married Lord Randolph Churchill, conceiving at roughly the same time their son Winston. He was born seven months later.

Lord Randolph Churchill and Jennie Jerome

And so Mr Newick's tales roll on. Here's a lock of hair of Napoleon, next to it, here's a lock of hair of Wellington.

Did you know that according to British etiquette cutlery has to be laid face up (fork prongs in the air), but in France it's vice versa - prongs down. It causes no end of raised eyebrows with some of the guests.



Lord Randolph Churchill and Jennie Jerome

And today the current ambassador Sir Peter Ricketts lives in a modest flat in a small part of the building. It's a blessed release for everyone, says Newick. At last the ambassador's got a kitchen of his own and doesn't have to summon the staff for a boiled egg.



The state dining room

And I suppose that's the point really. The hotel is a magnificent building, but it's no longer in any meaningful sense a residence - it is a constantly functioning part of Britain's diplomatic machine.

Last year there were 500 separate events here, promoting trade, educational links and culture. Just the day I was being shown around there was a talk in the evening on the 1919

Versailles peace conference given by the historian Margaret Macmillan.

And earlier the gardens had played host to the launch of the new Jaguar Land Rover. The lawn had been crawling with British car executives.

I wonder if any of them caught a glimpse of a little man in uniform sneaking through the bushes - on his way to faire l'amour avec Madame de Mathis in the gallery of the glorious Hotel de Charost.



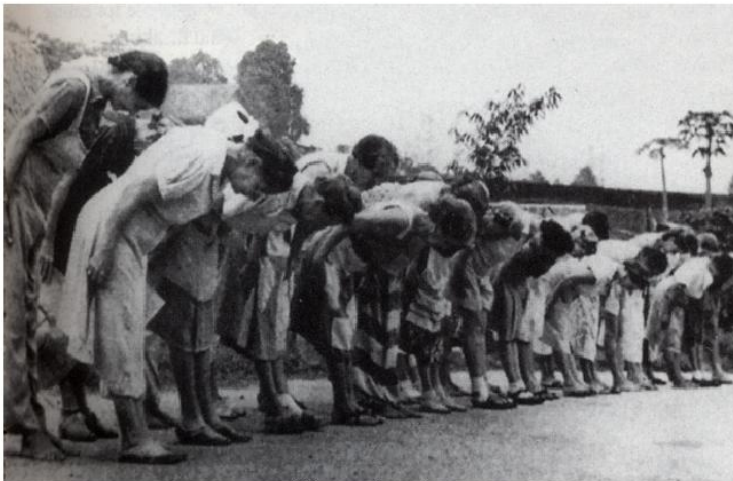
The Queen at the embassy

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The forgotten women of the 'war in the East'

18 October 2014

bbc.com



Women bowing

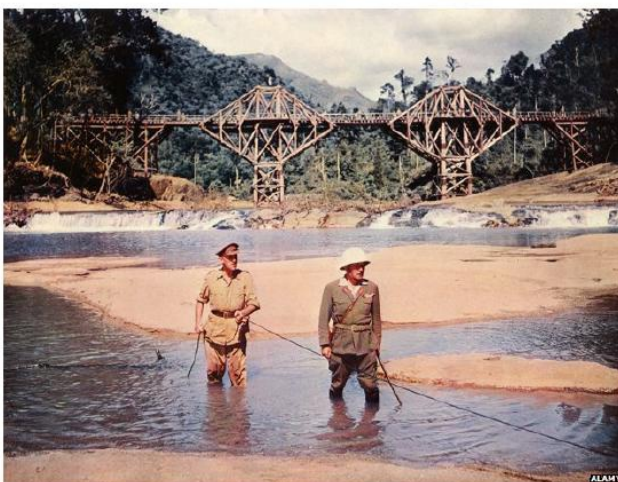
Richard Flanagan's *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* has won this year's Man Booker Prize. But there's more to the "war in the East" than the horrors of the Burma railway says novelist Isabel Wolff.

The Narrow Road to the Deep North is a magnificent novel and a worthy winner of the Man Booker Prize. Its story of Tasmanian army surgeon Dorrigo Evans and his fight to save the men under his command from starvation, disease, and the relentless

brutality of their Japanese captors, will stay with me for the rest of my life.

The book is a powerful addition to the canon of films and literature that dramatise the horrors of life as a POW in the Pacific War. *Bridge On the River Kwai*, *Merry Christmas Mr Lawrence*, *The Railway Man* and the soon-to-be-released *Unbroken*, about the Olympic runner and Japanese camp survivor, Louis Zamperini, all focus on the suffering of Allied soldiers in the Far East.

Indeed, when we reflect on that part of World War Two we think, automatically, of these brave military men, of whom there were 132,000. Yet there were 130,000 Allied civilians in the region - predominantly women and children - who also endured appalling privation and cruelty, but whose story is barely known.



Scene from the Bridge on the River Kwai

Once Japan had conquered South-East Asia, the Europeans, Americans and Australians who had been living there as planters, teachers, missionaries and civil servants were rounded up and trucked away to the 300 "civilian assembly areas" - in reality concentration camps - that the Japanese had created. Ten thousand British were interned in China, Singapore and Hong Kong, while 3,000 Americans were interned in the Philippines, at Santo Tomas.

By far the largest group were the 108,000 Dutch civilians, 62,000 of them women and children, who were sent to camps on Java, Sumatra, Borneo and Timor. Their ordeal was to last three and half years and would claim the lives of 13,000, due to starvation, exhaustion

and disease. Yet when I published my novel, *Ghostwritten*, about the internment on Java of a Dutch girl and her family, the most frequent response from readers to this part of wartime history was: "I had never heard about this."

You have to be over 45 to remember the 1980s TV drama, *Tenko*, about a group of British and Australian women interned in a camp on Sumatra, which is also the setting for the 1997 film, *Paradise Road*, about American and Dutch women struggling to survive in a camp in Palembang.



Tenko

But where the Thai-Burma Railway continues to fascinate writers and historians, with two Hollywood films and a major novel this year alone, there's little awareness of what the civilians endured.

For most, a near paradisaical life in the tropics had come to an abrupt end with the Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbour in December 1941, followed soon after by the Fall of Singapore. While the Allied troops were sent to slave on construction projects in Burma, Singapore and Japan, the civilians were imprisoned in what were, for

the most part, segregated camps.

The men's camps, for men and boys over the age of 15, were in former government buildings and disused barracks, while the women and children's camps were fenced-off areas of cities such as Batavia (now Jakarta) and Bandung. In camps like these women and children were crammed, 50 or 60 at a time, into houses that would normally have accommodated one family.



A house in Tjihapit Bandung used for internment

A house in Tjihapit Bandung used for internment

With such chronic overcrowding, poor sanitation was the norm, and dysentery and typhus flourished, along with scabies, bedbugs and lice. Education was banned - children would write their numbers with a stick in the dirt - and females aged between 11 and 60 all had to do "useful work". Many women were "furniture ladies", whose job was to empty houses of furniture, then take it to another, already emptied house, for the future use of the Japanese.

Working in pairs, they would lift tables, cupboards and even pianos on to a "buffalo" cart. But

instead of the cart being pulled by a buffalo the women would have to put on the harness and haul it themselves. Others worked in the *dapur* or central kitchen where they would chop firewood and scrub the old oil barrels that were used as giant saucepans. Some repaired the hated *gedek* - the fence - while others had to scoop sewage out of the overflowing latrines or make coffins for the ever increasing number of dead.

In addition to this distressing, undignified and exhausting work, the women were subjected to constant brutality. To look a soldier in the eye, or fail to bow to him instantly would incur a vicious slapping that could break a nose, or loosen teeth. At Tenko, or roll call, which took place twice a day, the internees had to stand for hours in the blazing sun, with no hats allowed and not even the elderly or children allowed to sit down.

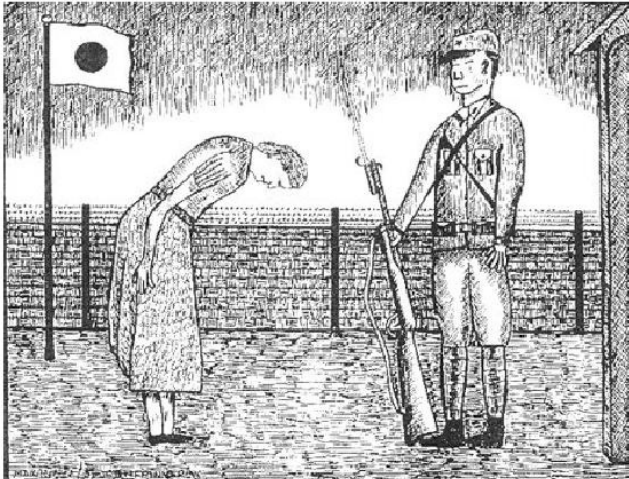


Illustration of woman bowing to camp guard

A survivor's drawing - material courtesy of gastdocenten.com

UK Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg's mother, Hermance, was in Camp Tjideng in Batavia, with her mother and sisters. She remembers having to bow deeply towards Japan at Tenko, "with our little fingers on the side seams of our skirt. If we did not do it properly we were beaten." Another punishment, head shaving, was so common that the women would simply wrap a scarf round their bloodied scalp and carry on.

Worse even than these sanctions was the fear of starvation as the rations of what passed for food - tapioca gruel - dwindled to half a cup per person a day. Desperate to keep their children alive, women would catch frogs, lizards and snails and boil them in a tin cup on the back of their irons.

The more daring risked being savagely beaten or even executed, as they crept to the *gedek* to trade their meagre possessions with local people for a banana or a couple of eggs. The internees became so obsessed with food that they would feverishly swap recipes, writing out the ingredients, discussing the method then mentally savouring the delicious dish that they would never get to eat.

Women and children washing - material



Women in the washing room

courtesy of gastdocenten.com

Amid all this, the greatest fear for mothers of boys was that their sons would be taken away. The age at which boys were transferred to men's camps dropped from 15 at the start of the war, to 13 then 11, until by 1944 boys of 10 were being transported. As they waited to climb on to the lorries they would cling to their mothers, not knowing whether they'd ever see them again.

By the time liberation came on 15 August 1945, the degradation of these women was complete. Like the POWs in their loin cloths, they had virtually no clothes, many wearing old tea towels for bras, and "sandals" fashioned out of strips of rubber tyres.

Like the POWs they were skeletally thin, half-blind with malnutrition and, as with the POWs, huge numbers had died.

I have no wish to diminish the heroic Prisoners of War that Flanagan has written about with such brilliance, or ever to forget what they endured. But thousands of women and children also lived with hunger, disease, cruelty and death, and we should remember their ordeal, and their courage, too.



Emaciated inmates in the hospital of the Tjideng internment camp on Java, Indonesia in December 1945

December 1945: Three female inmates in the hospital of the Tjideng internment camp on Java, Indonesia, suffering from dysentery and malnutrition.

The fighter pilots who navigated war using a school atlas

19 October 2014

bbc.com



A German soldier stands by a row of Fokker DR-1 tri-planes on an airfield in Germany

When the world went to war in 1914 the Wright Brothers had only made the world's first powered flight little over a decade before. But the remarkable advances made in aviation during World War One are still at the core of air power today, says Dr Peter Gray.

To say the first aeroplanes used in WW1 were extremely basic is something of an understatement. Cockpits

were open and instruments were rudimentary. There were no navigational aids and pilots had to rely on whatever maps could be found. A school atlas or a roadmap if necessary.

Getting lost was commonplace and landing in a field to ask directions was not unusual, as was flying alongside railway lines hoping to read station names on the platforms. But throughout the war there was a spiral of technological developments, as first one side and then the other gained the ascendancy.

To this day the core roles of air power - control of the air, strike, reconnaissance and mobility - have their roots in the evolution of aviation before and during WW1. From the deployment of Tornados to RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus to conduct operations against Islamic State in Iraq, to providing combat air patrols over the recent Nato summit in Wales.

How aviation came of age



Picture of a plane

Aviation evolved rapidly during WW1, with modern and more effective aircraft replacing the basic machines that took to the skies in 1914. Dr Peter Gray explores how the aeroplane turned into a machine of war in a free online course (MOOC) from the BBC and the University of Birmingham Centre for War Studies.

For the British it all started on 13 August 1914 at 08:20, when Lieutenant H D Harvey-Kelly landed

the first Royal Flying Corps (RFC) aircraft to deploy in WW1 at Amiens in northern France.

This may not seem such a big deal today, but was a major achievement then - and a hazardous one. Crews were not always sure where the enemy was. The danger was all the greater because the troops on the ground were not expert in aircraft recognition so just shot at anything that flew, regardless of which side it was on.

Wing Commander PB Joubert de la Ferte remarked in August 1914 that he regretted the arrival of British troops because the RFC would be fired on by the Germans, the French and now the English.



Pilots ready to drop bombs by hand

Pilots dropped bombs by hand from planes

In the early days of war, the aircraft of the RFC were in use daily to monitor the movements of the German Army in France and Belgium. As the benefits of "eyes in the sky" became increasingly evident to both sides, it became obvious that steps would need to be taken to prevent the opposition from gaining significant advantage. The enemy would need to be shot down.

"Start Quote

The aircraft look incredibly flimsy, precarious to manoeuvre on the ground and subject to every gust of wind - but to those who flew them, they were to be marvelled at"

At first this consisted of little more than pilots taking pot shots at each other with their service revolvers. But as technology improved airframes became more manoeuvrable and engines more powerful and it was soon possible to mount machine guns. The age of air-to-air combat had begun.

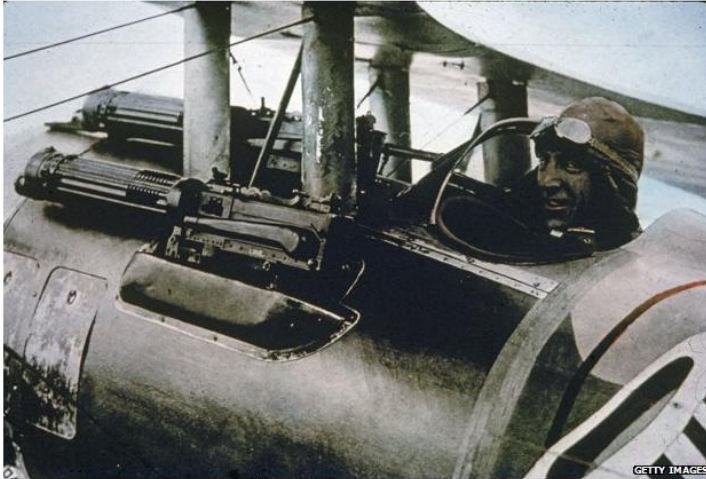
The improvements also meant crews could carry more than simple hand grenades in their pockets. Recognisable bombs and bomb racks added a strike component to the roles of air power in warfare. This development took a sinister turn when Germany started long-range bombing attacks on London, primarily with Zeppelins and then Gotha bombers. Total war was now on the doorsteps of family homes.

Control of the air also became paramount over the trenches and has remained so ever since in every conflict undertaken.

As the war progressed, tactics and technology improved markedly with each side trying to outwit the other, both in the air and on the drawing boards of the aircraft designers.

Eyes in the sky

- How battles in the sky changed military tactics



American flying ace Eddie Rickenbacker

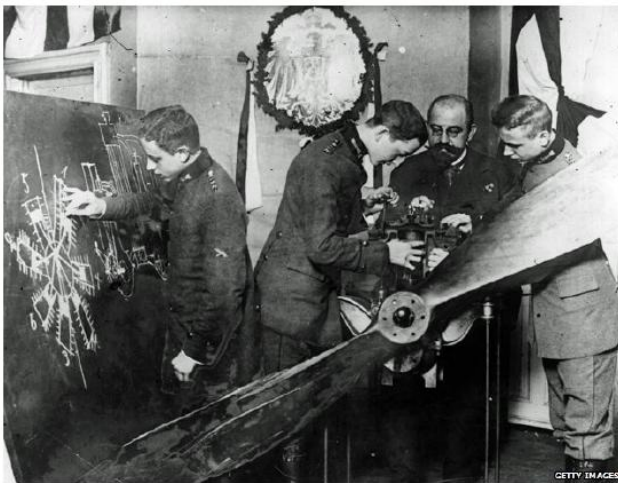
This was matched by an unprecedented growth in the aviation industry. By early 1915 the British Army reckoned it would need some 50 squadrons of aircraft, up to 700 planes in total. When Kitchener, as Secretary of State for War, saw the estimate he swept aside official objections with curt instruction to double the figure.

Pilots were needed in ever-increasing numbers to fly the new machines and replace casualties. Although the RFC was relatively small, their ratio of losses

was at least as high as in the infantry.

But there was never a shortage of volunteers either to fly as a pilot or as an observer. The romance of flying was an attractive proposition, it avoided the tedium of life in the trenches and offered a novel way of going to war.

From today's vantage point, the aircraft of WW1 look incredibly flimsy, precarious to manoeuvre on the ground and seemingly subject to every gust of wind in the air. But to those who flew them, they were to be marvelled at. There were over 50 different aircraft designs during WW1, with five distinct technological generations, according to American historian Richard Hallion.



German pilots receive instruction on the mechanism of an aeroplane

On all sides there was never a shortage of volunteers eager to learn to fly. The Versailles Treaty after WW1 stated German military aircraft were to be scrapped.

Over the course of the war the countries involved in the fighting produced more than 200,000 aircraft and even more engines. French industry alone accounted for a third of these.

At the end of the war, the Allied nations were out-producing the Germans by nearly five-to-one in terms of aircraft and over seven-to-one in engines. The UK was producing 31 times

more aircraft per month than it had owned at the beginning of the conflict and the RAF was not only the first independent air service, but also the largest.

The aircraft in 1918 were clearly recognisable as direct descendants of their pre-war predecessors with open cockpits, no parachutes and wood and doped fabric construction. But they had reached a degree of sophistication in handling and engine performance which would



German Military aircraft being dismantled and scrapped after WW1

make a sound platform for the developments that were to come in the inter-war years and on from then.

As mail routes were opened and exploration flights carried out, records were set for transoceanic crossings and the pieces were all in place for an airline industry to take off, both over the then British Empire and continental land masses.

But this also had a darker side as the technology necessary to convert transport aircraft into long-range bombers was minimal. All was in place for the highly controversial bombing campaigns of World War Two.

It would then only take parallel developments in nuclear physics for the stage to be set for the attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The Cold War inevitably followed with the spectre of nuclear Armageddon ever present.



Planes

Pilots would shoot their revolvers at the enemy

Equally, by the end of WW1, the basic key roles of air power - control of the air, strike, reconnaissance and mobility - had all been demonstrated. They remain the same today.

Where there is a stark difference, is in the life expectancy of those involved. A century on, we still shudder at the scale of the casualties in WW1, whether in the trenches or in the air.

This obviously varied with time and activity over the war, but poet Robert Graves noted that RFC casualties were markedly higher than for infantry subalterns. Hallion quotes figures of one fatality for every 92 flying hours.

Today, living to draw one's pension is the norm. Even in hostile environments such as Iraq and Afghanistan, where the flying is likely to be either dull, dirty or especially dangerous, it is left to drones to bear the brunt.

Although still expensive to operate, they do not put aircrew in harm's way, which has made them highly popular with commanders.

The next major change will possibly be even more revolutionary than flight was a century ago. It will happen when artificial intelligence is sufficiently advanced for these machines to operate completely independently.

Will the day of the robot come, or is that a step too far?

**"COME PREPARED TO STAY FOREVER"****Belle Gunness -- "Lady Bluebeard"**

Belle Gunness with her three children. No one expected the sturdy hog farmer to be a lethal seductress -- and serial killer. (La Porte County Historical Society)

On April 28, 1908 a mysterious fire raged through the small brick farmhouse of Belle Gunness, a widow who lived outside of the pleasant and unassuming town of La Porte, Indiana. The fire at first seemed to be no more than a horrible tragedy that claimed the lives of Belle and her three lovely children, aged 1, nine and five, but then questions began to emerge from the smoldering ruins. The answers, and the unsolved mysteries, that would emerge from these ruins would make headlines across the Midwest.

In life, 48 year-old Belle Gunness had stood just under five and a half feet tall but had weighed a massive 280 pounds, however the body that was found in the remains of her home was no more than 150. Had the blaze somehow burned away the flesh from Belle's portly body? No one could really say for sure since the head of the corpse was missing. How had this happened? Could a falling section of the house have severed her head -- or had it been cut off by a murderer who had set fire to the house to hide his crime?

Belle Gunness was no stranger to mystery or to controversy. Several years before, her husband, Peter Gunness, had been killed (according to Belle) when a meat grinder had toppled off the shelf in the kitchen and had struck him in the head. But when the coroner looked at the body, he allegedly muttered "this is a case of murder." To make matter worse, one of Belle's children even told a classmate that her mother had hit him over the head with a cleaver. The authorities investigated but Belle was so convincing, and so formidable, at the inquest that no charges were ever filed. And after her husband's death, Belle was never considered a proper widow. It was common knowledge in town that she had taken her handyman, Ray Lamphere, to her bed on lonely winter nights.

It would be Ray Lamphere that the sheriff would turn to when he started having his own doubts about an accidental fire at the Gunness home. He considered the case a

Ray

definite example of murder and arson. He set two of his deputies digging in the debris of the house for Belle's head and sent two others to arrest Lamphere. When drinking, the slow-witted handyman often boasted of sleeping with his employer, which came as a surprise to those who only saw Belle as the burly woman who liked to dress in men's overalls and do her own hog butchering. There was another side to the woman though, which Ray Lamphere saw -- as well as numerous strangers who were often seen going for a carriage ride with Belle on Sunday afternoons.



Lamphere
(La Porte
County
Historical
Society)

On those occasions, Belle was seen wearing a corset and her finest clothing, with her hair done in the latest styles of the women's magazines that came from Chicago and New York. Unrecognizable from the rough farm woman, she was usually accompanied by a handsome young man who had arrived with his suitcase at the railroad station a few days before. Ray Lamphere had endured these attentive strangers but had never lost his temper over any of them, until the winter of 1908. At that time, he was introduced to a gentleman from South Dakota, Andrew Hegelian -- Belle's new husband-to-be. Lamphere protested and Belle promptly fired him. Lamphere soon began drinking heavily and began showing up at Belle's house. She had him arrested for trespassing and then mentioned to the sheriff that "I'm afraid that he'll set fire to the place."



This immediately came back to mind for Sheriff Smutzer and he had Lamphere locked up and charged with the murder of Belle and her children. The handyman **Hegelian**, claimed to be innocent but his cries fell on deaf ears until Asle Hegelian showed up in town from South Dakota, searching for his missing brother, Andrew. He told Sheriff Smutzer that Andrew had answered a matrimonial ad that had been placed by Belle Gunness in a Norwegian language newspaper. In her reply, Belle offered true love and a life of wedded bliss, but also mentioned a quick \$1,000 that she needed to pay off a mortgage. She ended her letter with "my heart beats in wild rapture for you --- come prepared to stay forever." And apparently, he did. He **answered** withdrew his life savings from the bank and was never heard from again. **one of** **Belle's** **ads.**

By the time that Asle arrived in La Porte, he was sure that his brother had met with foul play. He became even more convinced when he went out to the ruins of Belle's home and watched as the men digging for her head turned up eight men's watches, assorted bones and human teeth instead. He searched through the

property on his own and shouted to the men to start digging in the rubbish hole that was located in Belle's hog pen. As they began turning the earth, they found four bodies -- all of them skillfully sliced apart and wrapped in oilcloth. One of the bodies belonged to Andrew Hegelian.

The town was shocked and more men came out to the farm to join in the search. On the following day, three more bodies were discovered and in all, 14 of Belle's victims were pieced together, with a quantity of teeth, bones and watches left over. The gruesome finds made headlines in newspapers all over the Midwest and relatives began to appear from all over the region to claim bodies. All of them told of lonesome brothers, uncles and cousins answering Belle's matrimonial ads and traveling hopefully to La Porte with their life savings stuffed in their pockets. Sheriff Smutzer estimated that Belle had made about \$30,000 from her victims. She had drugged them and then had cut up the bodies as she did her hogs.

But even with this mystery cleared up, the unanswered question of the body in the burned house remained. Was it Belle's or had someone else been placed there to die? Belle's head never appeared but the sheriff thought that her teeth might. A neighbor who had once been a prospector offered to sluice the debris for any of Belle's teeth.

He found many additional male teeth in the ruins but only one of which could be linked to Belle. This convinced some of the locals that the 150 pound body had been Belle's but others scoffed, saying that any woman who would leave her children to die in a fire so that she could escape would certainly not balk at knocking out one of her own teeth in the interests of eluding arrest.



Dime novel accounts of Belle's exploits slimmed her down from her real-life 280 pounds to make her look more like the seductress that she really was.

(Left) Crews of men sifted through the ruins of Belle's house in a search for remains



(Right) The sluicing operation that was started to search for Belle's teeth in what remained of the house



The lingering controversy spilled over into the courtroom for despite the grisly discoveries on Belle's property, the sheriff doggedly persisted in bringing Ray Lamphere to trial for her murder. Both sides fought hard and the jury eventually brought in a rather curious verdict. Lamphere was acquitted of the murder but was convicted of setting fire to the house. He received a sentence of two to 21 years in the state penitentiary. He eventually died in prison, having contracted tuberculosis in jail while awaiting trial, but he confessed his role in Belle's crimes

to his cellmate before he succumbed to the disease. He told him that he was aware of Belle's murderous activities and had even buried bodies for her when she was finished cutting them up. He said that the headless woman that was found in the fire was that a female derelict that Belle had found in Chicago. She had poisoned the woman with strychnine and then had placed her in bed with the children. She had removed one of her own teeth and then had set the house on fire. After that, she had vanished with the money that the men had unwittingly brought to her. Lamphere was supposed to hear from Belle after she got away to safety -- but he never had. Unbelievably, the moronic handyman died in his prison cell, still in love with a human monster.

And what happened to Belle Gunness herself? No one knows. She vanished without a trace in April 1908 and was never heard from again.

Bid to ban Malaysia's Oktoberfest

10:07 UK time, Tuesday, 07 October 2014



Some posters for Oktoberfest events have shown women in low-cut outfits

Some Muslim groups in Malaysia are trying to get the country's Oktoberfest banned on the grounds that it's offensive to the community, it appears.

An MP is heading a campaign to get the federal and state governments to halt the annual beer festival, which he describes as part of a culture of "evil and sin", [Malaysia's Daily Express newspaper reports](#). While not denying the right of non-Muslims to consume alcohol, Nasrudin Hassan of the Pan-Islamic Party says that it "should be done privately and neither promoted nor feted any further in this way". In a Facebook post, he compared the event to "mass-promoted adultery". However, Nasrudin's PAS colleague Khalid Samad said the festival had every right to take place, [as long as it was targeted at non-Muslims](#).

Apart from issues surrounding alcohol, one of the major bones of contention appears to be [a publicity poster](#) for the Carlsberg Malaysia-backed festival, showing a waitress in a low-cut German costume carrying six steins of beer. Publicity stunts leading up to the festival also featured Malaysian women in similarly low-cut mini-dresses in company colours.

Backing the argument that the event should be banned is law professor Datin Noor Aziah Mohd Awal, who claims that the festival is "unconstitutional" as events with alcohol cannot be organised in open spaces, [the Malay Mail reports](#).



One publicity stunt involved a seven-seater bike and waitresses with beer steins

Bulgarian archaeologists find skeleton of child buried with anti-vampire ritual

sofiaglobe.com

Written by The Sofia Globe staff on October 30, 2014 in Bulgaria



voden archaeology

The skeleton of a child whose legs had been bound after death in an anti-vampire ritual has been found by archaeologists at a dig at the Voden Fortress in the Rhodopes, according to the head of the Assenovgrad Historical

Museum, Ivan Doukov.

Three “vampire” skeletons were found this autumn during the archaeological dig at the fortress, near a village that dates back to Roman and ultimately Thracian times.

Local media quoted Doukov as saying that in the case of one of the other bodies, the legs were tied after death, and in the other case, the feet were severed.

So-called “vampire” burials in Bulgaria, involving remains dating back to medieval times, have excited considerable interest.

Earlier in October, at the Perperikon site, the skeleton of a man was found with a ploughshare driven through its ribcage. The skeleton was said to date from the 13th century CE. Driving a ploughshare through the ribcage was among rituals, like tying the legs or placing stones on the chest, intended to prevent the dead becoming undead.

The Assenovgrad museum’s Doukov said that medieval people were very superstitious.

“They believed that if someone in his lifetime was a bad person or if he died under unusual circumstances, he could become a vampire and harass his living relatives.”

Doukov said that such superstitions still exist in the Rhodope Mountains and northwestern Bulgaria. They are very similar to medieval beliefs about vampires and other malicious beings.

In August, Doukov announced that 30 graves dating from the 30th century, most of them of children, as well as a Thracian burial from the fifth to sixth century BCE had been uncovered

at the Voden fortress above the town.

At a news conference earlier this year, Perperikon archaeological chief Professor Nikolai Ovcharov said that the highest incidence of graves where indications of anti-vampire rituals were found was in the Rila and Rhodope mountain areas.

These were places where Christianity was in a weaker position against enduring pagan traditions, he said. Such rituals continued at least into the time of Ottoman rule in Bulgaria, he said.

(Archive photo of excavations at Voden Fortress: BNR)

/ Copyright 2014 Evernote Corporation. All rights reserved. */.en-markup-crop-options { top: 18px !important; left: 50% !important; margin-left: -100px !important; width: 200px !important; border: 2px rgba(255,255,255,.38) solid !important; border-radius: 4px !important; }.en-markup-crop-options div div:first-of-type { margin-left: 0px !important; }*

CASE NO. 858-748

PLAINTANT —

PHONE NO. _____

TIME OF EVENT 10/29/70 TIME OF EVENT 2210 DATE RECEIVED 10/29/70

DESCRIPTION OF CASE Large Rabbit at Large----- (Vandalism) CLASS _____ CODE _____

At this time Officer Brown stated that the complainant could be reached through the business office at Kings Peak West, or at the trailer office at the construction sight of the new homes. He further stated that the compl lives in Maryland somewhere, but that he (Brown) did not have any further information regarding the complainant.

It was further learned that the house at which the alleged "Large White Rabbit", was chopping on the porch post, was located at the intersection of Guinea Rd., and Pomeroy Dr., and that there were several hack marks on the post.

After receiving this information I responded to the Kings Park West sub division in an attempt to locate the Large White Rabbit.

On 10/31/70 at approx., 1655 hours after returning to the office, I recieved a phone call from a subject by the name of _____ of _____ Falls Church.,

Mr. [redacted] related the following story; At approx., 1645 hours, he had received a telephone call from a subj., who stated; "Is this [redacted]?" "You don't know me, I'm known as the Axe man". Subject went on to say, Mr. [redacted] you have been messing up my property, by dumping tree stumps, limbs and brush, and other things on the property. The unknown subj., then stated

~~19/0/70~~

~~Tenn. 14 T. Johnson~~

COUNTY OF FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA
POLICE DEPARTMENT
INVESTIGATION REPORT

UNIT ASGD 307 AREA 300

CASE NO. 858 748

DIVISION 5 DUTY STATION 4

DATE 10-29-70

COMPLAINANT

PHONE NO. _____

HOME ADDRESS SECURITY - Kings Park West

DATE RECEIVED 10-29-70 TIME RECEIVED HR. 22 MIN. 51 WEATHER RAIN LIGHT DARK

DATE OF EVENT FRES TIME OF EVENT HR. 2003 MIN. 00 DAY OF WEEK 5TH FEL - MISC MISC

PLACE OF EVENT 5309 Guinea Rd. CLASS 51 CODE 661

NATURE OF CASE LARGE Rabbit AT LARGE 47002

SUBJECT NO. 1 W/M 20 5'8 NED

ADDRESS _____

SUBJECT NO. 2 _____

ADDRESS _____

DETAILS OF INVESTIGATION

This unit along with units 195, 303, 422, 266 and 348
Responded to the above location for a subject dressed
as a Rabbit with an AK. This subject, the Rabbit had
taken his AK to a porch post at Guinea Rd
and then run from the complainant.

All these units checked the area and found no
Rabbit.

No Further Action Taken.

Case Closed

T.O.T.C.I.R.

Att. Lt. Wilson

TIME NOTIFIED 2251 TIME ARRIVED 2252 TIME CLEARED 2307 DATE 10-29-70

FOLLOW UP OR FURTHER

INVESTIGATION REQUIRED BY _____

APPROVED 10-29-70 SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATING OFFICER J. L. Brown

W. JOHNSON

CASE NO. 858-748

PHONE NO. _____

COMPLAINANT _____

DATE OF EVENT 10/29/70 TIME OF EVENT 2210 DATE RECEIVED 10/29/70

NATURE OF CASE Large White Rabbit At Large--- (Vandalism) CLASS _____ CODE _____

DETAILS. see the Bunny Man ,he (Bunny Man), does not always have his Bunny suit
on.

Mrs then stated that the neighborhood children who have seen
or been with the "Bunny Man", describe him as an older teenager, meaning
thathe is between the ages of eight-en and twenty years of age.

On 11/4/70 at approx., 1647 hours I made contact with Mrs

and set a time to interview her

son / 8 yrs.

At approx., 1600 hours I interviewed the subject and at this time he advised that he had never seen the "Bunny Man", and had never been with him. He further related that he had only heard of the Bunny Man at school, from the rest of the children talking about him.

_____ further stated that one of his friends, named _____ had seen the "Bunny Man" on previous occasions.

On 11/5/70 I responded to the Laurel Ridge School and talked to the principal of the school. I explained to him why I was there and requested he furnish me with the name and address of the parents of which he did.

I then responded to the home of Mr and Mrs

in the Kings Park West Sub Division.

No one was at home at this time.

COUNTY OF FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA
POLICE DEPARTMENT
SUPPLEMENTARY INVESTIGATION REPORT

W. JOHNSON

UNIT ASGD 197 AREA 30-0

CASE NO. 858-748

DIVISION 4 DUTY STATION 1

COMPLAINANT _____ PHONE NO. _____

ADDRESS Security Gaurd-- Kings Park West

DATE OF EVENT 10/29/70 TIME OF EVENT 2210 DATE RECEIVED 10/29/70

NATURE OF CASE Large White Rabbit At Large (Vandalism) CLASS _____ CODE _____

DETAILS color, bearing Md registration, 1970 in the parking lot.

In the veh., on the front seat pratically concealed, was a white rabbit costume.

On the floor were several books pertaining to sex.

The vehicle was listed to

The vehicle was allegedlt leased to a

in Baltimore, Md.,.

The subject who brought the vehicle to the parking lot is described as
a W/M/20 to 30 years of age---70"---Stocky Build---and further described as
rather handsome.

On 11/4/70 at approx., 1448 hours I responded to the home of Mrs.,
in Kings park West.

Mrs. stated that she had heard her son saying something to the effect
that he and his friend were supposed to go meet with the Bunny ..a..".

I then talked to Mrs. son /8yrs.
related to me that was supposed to take to meet the
Bunny Man, as knew where the Bunny Man stayed and has been with him
before.

further related that most of the time, when the children go to

CASE OR REF MONS NO.

11/8/70

Inv., W.L. Johnson

V. JOHNSON

CASE NO. 858-748

COMPLAINANT _____

PHONE NO. _____

DATE OF EVENT 10/29/70

TIME OF EVENT 2210

DATE RECEIVED 10/29/70

NATURE OF CASE Large White Rabbit At Large (Vandalism)

CLASS _____ CODE _____

~~DETAILS: Mr. may be the person posing as the White Rabbit as the description that Mr. provided is similar to the description of the subject, in this case. Also the subj., referred to himself as the "Axe Man", which also leads one to believe that the White Rabbit and the Axe man may be the same person.~~

The stake out was set up at 2300 hours and ended at 0100, with negative results. Mr. [redacted] was advised to contact me in the event he recieved any more phone calls. Mr. [redacted] has not been heard from since.

Several attempts again were made to contact Mr. [redacted] in the meantime.

On 11/4/70 at approx. 1300 hours I recieved a call from Officer

Bender of this department in reference to this case.

Officer Bender stated that a Mrs. _____ had contacted him and stated that her son, and a subject named _____ were alleged to know where the "Bunny Man" stayed and possibly who he was.

Prior to responding to the residence, I recieved a call from
John Bazyk of the department, communications section and he related the
following information:

Bazyk stated that he had recieved a call from the Metropolitan Police
Department to the effect that a Mr. _____ a parking lot attendant at the P.M.I.
Parking lot at 9th and D st., N.W., HAD OBSERVED A 1976 Ford L.T.D. Blue in

CASE OR SUMMONS NO.

11/8/70

Inv. W. L. Johnson

M. JOHNSON

CASE NO. 858-748

COMPLAINANT .

PHONE NO.

DATE OF EVENT 10/29/70 TIME OF EVENT 2210 DATE RECEIVED 10/29/70

NATURE OF CASE Large White Rabbit At Large----(Vandalism) CLASS _____ CODE _____

and talking about the situation. The unknown subj., then advised Mr _____
to walk along Guinea Rd., between Zion Dr., and the railroad tracks between
2330 and 2400 hours 10/31/70. The subject then stated " You won't know me,
but I'll know you. The subject then hung up the phone.

Mr. _____ stated that the subject who had called him sounded as though he may be a W/M/ in his late teens or early twenties, Subjects voice sort of quivered, as though he were scared. Mr. _____ related that he thinks he has heard the voice before, but could not remember where or when he heard the voice, or whose it was. Mr. _____ further related that he intended to meet the subj., if he _____ could find some transportation to the scene.

At 1910 hours Mr _____ was contacted and advised that a stake out was going to be placed on the scene, and in the area mentioned by the unknown subj.

Mr. [redacted] stated that he would notify me by 2230 hours as to whether or not he would definitely be there.

At approx., 2300 hours , myself and Sgt., Hurst, Inv., Anderson and Inv., Shifko , went to the area of Zion Dr., and Guinea Rd., and set up surveillance in the area.

Prior to going to the area, Mr. [redacted] was advised to plan his arrival in the area for approx., 2330 hours.

The stake out was set up with the thinking that the subj., who had called

CASE OR SUMMONS NO. _____ 11/8/70
DATE

Inv., W.L. Johnson

www.victoriamuseum.com

COUNTY OF FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA
POLICE DEPARTMENT
SUPPLEMENTARY INVESTIGATION REPORT

W. JOHNSON

UNIT ASGD 197 AREA 30-0

CASE NO. 858-748

DIVISION 4 DUTY STATION 1

COMPLAINANT _____

PHONE NO. _____

ADDRESS Security Gaurd ----Kings Park West

DATE OF EVENT 10/29/70 TIME OF EVENT 2210 DATE RECEIVED 10/29/70

NATURE OF CASE Large White Rabbit At Large--(Vandalism) CLASS _____ CODE _____

DETAILS After a very extensive investigation into this and all other cases of this same nature, it is still unsubstantiated as to whether or not there really is a white rabbit.

The only people who have seen this so called white rabbit have been children of rather young ages, and the complainant in this case

Upon interviewing every one in this case that may have had any knowledge of any-incidents concerning a white rabbit, that has been no significant information uncovered that would lead to the identity of the person or persons that were posing as a white rabbit.

This case will be marked as inactive.

INAC TIVE.

CASE OR SUMMONS NO. _____ 3/14/71 Inv. W. I. Johnson

W. JOHNSON

CASE NO. 858-748

PHONE NO. _____

DATE OF EVENT 10/29/70 TIME OF EVENT 2210 DATE RECEIVED 10/29/70

NATURE OF CASE Large White Rabbit At Large---(Vandalism) CLASS _____ CODE _____

DETAILS the woods.

Mr. [redacted] stated that the subject was carrying an axe with a two to three foot long handle and a three to four inch blade on it. He further stated that he believed that the subject lived in the immediate area.

Mr. _____ went on to say that the subject spoke in a muddled tone and he
_____ felt that the subject had a french accent, at least it sounded
French to Mr. _____

On 11/5/70 I made contact with Mrs _____ and advised her who I was and why I was contacting her. I also talked to her son _____ who denied having any knowledge, what so ever of the "Bunny Man". He also stated that all he knew of the "Bunny Man", was what he had heard at school.

INVESTIGATION CONTINUING.

CALL OR FURNISH NO.

11/8/70

Inv., W.L. Johnson

Cannabis-eating sheep get high as a kite after munching £4,000-worth of drugs

metro.co.uk

Harry Readhead for Metro.co.uk Saturday 18 Oct 2014 12:02 pm



Cannabis-eating sheep get high as a kite after munching £4,000-worth of drugs

Farm manager Ms Budd said sheep had gone through seven bags of the plant by the time she found them (Picture: REX/Getty)

A flock of sheep spent an afternoon stumbling around making strange noises after accidentally feasting on thousands of pounds worth of cannabis.

Nellie Budd, who manages Fanny's Farm in Merstham, Surrey, said when she

went down to the field she thought someone had simply dumped some rubbish – and then smelled the illegal plant.

But by the time she realised, her greedy sheep had already made their way through seven bags of the Class B drug – worth around £4,000.

'At first I thought it was someone's hedgerow rubbish. I went down to collect the bags so the sheep weren't eating black plastic,' she told the Mirror.

'When I got there I realised it was a form of herbal cannabis plant. They were very strong in scent.

'I have no idea how they got there. It's right next to a road and the footpath is quite open.'

Officers took away the remainder of the drugs but said they could face problems finding where they came from because the sheep had eaten so much of the evidence.

Ms Budd, meanwhile, said she didn't think there had been any negative side effects to the sheep but added:

'I'll tell you about the meat next week.'

Car thief in custody after stealing funeral home vehicle during funeral

msnewsnow.com



Davarous White Source: Hinds County Sheriff's Dept.

Davarous White Source:
Hinds County Sheriff's Dept.

Source: WLBT

Source: WLBT

Source: WLBT

The Hinds County Sheriff's Department has arrested Davarous White for stealing a Westhaven Funeral Home vehicle during a morning funeral.



Source: WLBT

Westhaven employees were preparing for the home going service at St. Thomas Missionary Baptist church, when they noticed something was wrong.



Source: WLBT

"Once the funeral director went inside with the body to set up, he jumped in the car and took off," said Nathaniel Ford of Westhaven Funeral Home.

Westhaven officials, gave chase to their stolen car,

"High speed chase, 100 miles and hour," said Ford. "Our funeral directors jumped in

~~Morgan Redmon~~
Morgan Redmon Wh
Davarous White
Jennie Lundy + J
Jenny Lundy

Source: WLBT

the hearse, and tried to catch him and he was driving 90 miles and hour and the car went off and left him. Then Sheriff's department got in pursuit."

The chase went down I-20 into Jackson. The driver bailed out on Camellia lane, and escaped, ducking between houses.

Hinds county investigators say the car thief rode up to the funeral on his bike, which he dropped by the front door of the church, then and went inside. There he left his calling card, and a big clue for deputies, a signature on the funeral registry. Tonight, Davarous White is behind bars.

"I think it's ridiculous, you can't have a funeral service without problems like this," said Ford.

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Cat man from Kyushu walks nine cats in a stroller, draws crowds in Tokyo

rocketnews24.com



CatMan18

Japan is known for having a unique culture that perfectly balances two extreme worlds of tradition and fun. From cat cafes to cosplay-clad posers in Harajuku, it's the light-hearted, anything-goes attitude on the streets of Tokyo that brightens the serious, traditional side of society which likes to rein in anything different and out of the norm.

It's little surprise then, that people have been drawn to one of the newcomers to the street scene in Tokyo, a recently

retired man who goes by the name "Kyushu Neko Ojisan" (lit. *The Cat Man from Kyushu*). **Retirement for this gent means he's now free to walk his nine adorable cats in a baby buggy around Tokyo.** And his crowds of admirers are growing with every stroll he takes.

The Cat Man became a minor celebrity in Kagoshima, Kyushu, after a job transfer led him there six years ago. Separated from his family for work, he became known for walking his cats in a stroller through Kagoshima's famous Tenmonkan Arcade on the weekends. He was such a local fixture that when news got around that he and his cats would be leaving Kyushu after his retirement in March 2014, he was featured in an article by the Kagoshima Keizai newspaper.



CatMan0

After moving back to Tokyo at the end of March, Cat Man has been spotted at several main locations. He recently spent some time on the busy, upmarket street of Omotesando, near Harajuku, where a large crowd gathered to chat with him and take photos of his beautiful Chinchilla and Himalayan cats.

This is what nine cats in a stroller looks like. Number nine sits happily in a basket under the main carriage. You may wonder whether the cats are OK

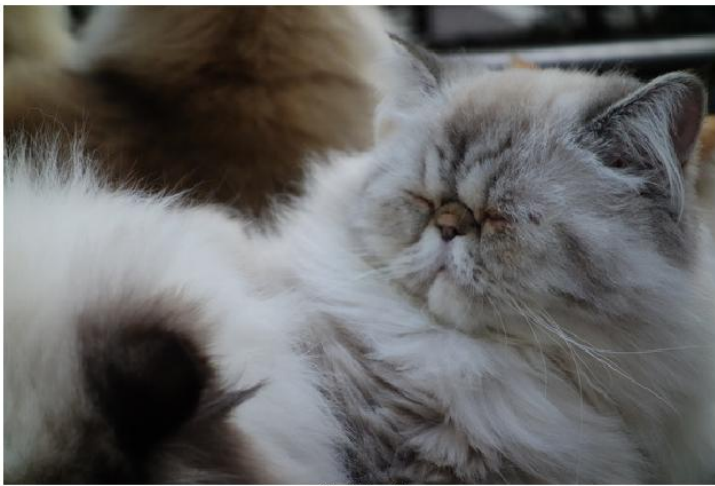
with being taken outdoors like this (and ordinarily we wouldn't recommend it), but Cat Man's furry friends seem perfectly at ease.



CatMan9

While it looked a bit crowded in the baby carriage, the cats were content to be outside in the fresh air, dozing off happily thanks to the body warmth of their travel companions.

The Cat Man from Kyushu says his cats have grown up well, thanks to the affection people lavish on them when he's out and about. It fills him with warmth when he sees smiles on people's faces as they stop to pet his cats.



CatMan8



CatMan12

We spotted the well-groomed cats again later in the evening, as their owner stopped to pick up some dinner.

While the others snoozed happily in the stroller, this

one kept guard until Cat Man returned.



CatMan14

If you'd like to find out more about the Cat Man from Kyushu and get information on his upcoming locations, check out his Twitter feed or Facebook page. If you do happen to bump into him, let us know where you saw him in the comments section below!

Sources: 九州猫おじさん *Twitter* 九州猫おじさん *Facebook* Kagoshima Keizai Shimbun

Photos © RocketNews24



CatMan29



CatMan19



CatMan15



CatMan20

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The “Cemetery Gun” Designed to Stop Grave Robbers

By Joshua Keating

Oct. 19 2014 11:40 AM

slate.com

*The Vault is **Slate's** new history blog. Like us on Facebook; follow us on Twitter @slatevault; find us on Tumblr. Find out more about what this space is all about here.*

In the 18th and 19th centuries, grave-robbing was a serious problem in Great Britain and the United States. Because surgeons and medical students could only legally dissect executed criminals or people who had donated their bodies to science (not a popular option at the time), a trade in illegally procured corpses sprang up. This cemetery gun, held in the Museum of Mourning Art at the Arlington Cemetery of Drexel Hill, Pa., was one dramatic strategy used to thwart so-called “resurrection men.”

The gun, which the museum dates to 1710, is mounted on a mechanism that allows it to spin freely. Cemetery keepers set up the flintlock weapon at the foot of a grave, with three tripwires strung in an arc around its position. A prospective grave-rober, stumbling over the tripwire in the dark, would trigger the weapon—much to his own misfortune.

Grave-robbers evolved to meet this challenge. Some would send women posing as widows, carrying children and dressed in black, to case the gravesites during the day and report the locations of cemetery guns and other defenses. Cemetery keepers, in turn, learned to wait to set the guns up after dark, thereby preserving the element of surprise.

Because the guns were rented by the week and were prohibitively expensive to buy, the poorer people most likely to end up beneath the anatomist's knife—historian Michael Sappol writes that these included “black people, criminals, prostitutes, the Irish, ‘freaks,’ manual laborers, indigents, and Indians”—probably wouldn't have benefited from this form of protection.

Thanks to curator Elizabeth Wojcik of the Museum of Mourning Art at the Arlington Cemetery.



Courtesy of the Museum of Mourning Art, Arlington Cemetery.

IN MEMORY OF
JOHN
CHAPMAN
BEST KNOWN AS
JOHNNY
APPLESEED
PIONEER APPLE
NURSERYMAN OF
RICHLAND COUNTY
FROM 1810 TO 1830

Child Walks Backwards up Wall in Horrifying Real Life Possession

moviepilot.com

Horror fans and people with a fascination for the paranormal will be chilled by the Possession of the Ammons Family.

Medical staff looked on shocked as her son, 9, walked backwards up a wall, The Daily Mail Reports.

Latoya Ammons of Gary, Indiana told the authorities of terrifying details, saying that her **three children had been possessed, manifesting in bulging eyes, shaking, and growling.**

Ammons contacted a psychic, who told her there were over 200 demons in their family home.

In one frightening incident, **Ammons saw her 12-year-old daughter levitating above her bed, totally unconscious.** The girl had no memory of the terrifying levitation taking place.

Just like *The Exorcist*, the family even called in a priest, Father Michael Maginot who, despite early reservations, became convinced enough by the case to perform three separate Exorcisms.



Father Maginot performed one Exorcism in Latin.

Father Maginot performed one Exorcism in Latin.

In another terrifying incident, one of the children seemed to be attacked by a demon as he read the Bible:

He felt like something was stabbing him in the stomach. **The more he was was reading the Bible, the more it was stabbing, punching...**

they saw something flying across the room and land blam like that.

Ammons says her children were all dragged and thrown around the house, sometimes suffering bleeding gums and breathing problems.

A police photo showing a shadowy figure in the home

As in *Deliver Us From Evil*, local law enforcement became involved. Initially highly skeptical, Captain Austin of the police department said his suspicions were allayed by a communication on his radio:

All of a sudden this growling voice came from my AM/FM radio. It said, 'YOU

'Religious zealot' Christian student 'decapitated 19-year-old friend because he thought he practiced witchcraft'

- **Isaiah Marin, 21, is charged with first-degree murder in Oklahoma in the attack that killed 19-year-old Jacob Crockett**
- **Crockett, the son of an Oklahoma Highway Patrol trooper, suffered several stab wounds and had his head 'mostly severed' from his body**
- **Marin is described as a 'heavy drug user' and 'religious zealot' and was said to had sparred with the victim in the past**
- **Marin was furious at Crockett for his interest in witchcraft, which he saw as contrary to his Christian faith, court records show**

A deeply Christian college student in Oklahoma allegedly nearly decapitated the son of a state trooper with a sword because the victim practiced witchcraft, police say.

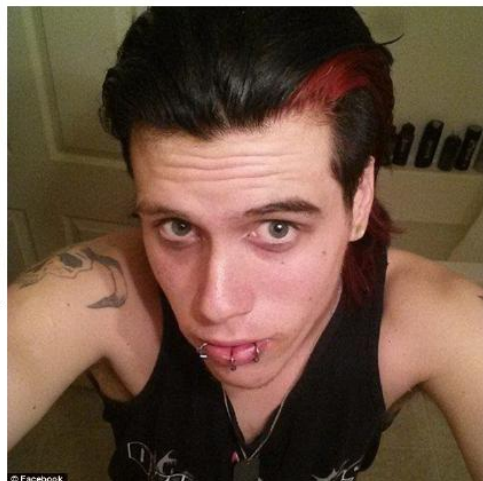
Isaiah Marin of Stillwater was charged Thursday with first-degree murder in the attack that killed 19-year-old Jacob Andrew Crockett a day earlier.

The two had been playing cards with a third pal, Marin's brother, when Marin removed the 'large black sword' from its sheath and began swinging it around, court records obtained by MailOnline show.

Scroll down for video



Devout Christian Isaiah Marin (left), 21, allegedly hacked 19-year-old Jacob Crockett (right) with a sword because of the victim's interest in witchcraft



Crockett, the son of an Oklahoma Highway Patrol trooper, suffered several stab wounds and had his head 'mostly severed' from his body

'I would never cut you, bro,' Marin assured his brother when asked to be careful.

Moments later, the brother told police, he heard 'the sound of someone getting stabbed.'

He looked up and saw blood gushing out of Crockett's chest.

Crockett, the son of an Oklahoma Highway Patrol trooper, suffered several stab wounds and had his head 'mostly severed' from his body. Cops found him lying in a pool of blood.

Marin ran from the scene, sword in hands, and called police from a restaurant parking lot.

'I murdered someone,' he told the dispatcher, according to court records. 'I hacked them to death with a machete.'



Captain Randy Dickerson of the Stillwater Police Department gave a press conference on Thursday to detail the gruesome crime

Above, investigators gather near the home where the brutal near-beheading occurred

He then began 'rambling' about sacrificing and magic.

Police found him fleeing down the street, leaving behind a trail of blood, the sword still in his hands.



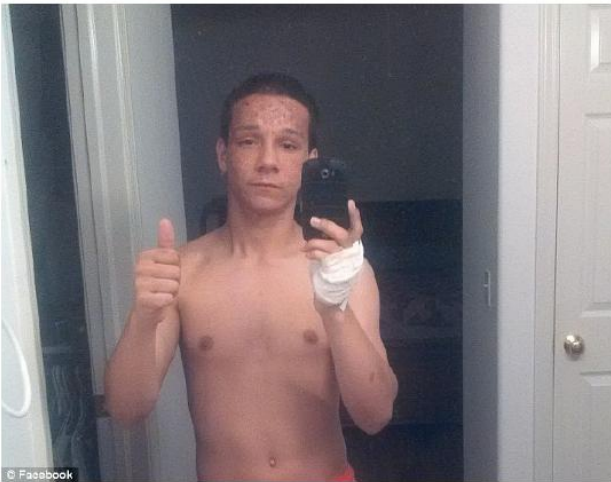
A student at Northern Oklahoma College, Marin was described as a 'heavy drug user' and 'religious zealot,' court records show.

He had been watching YouTube

videos 'related to his Christian beliefs and the Book of Matthew' just hours earlier.

Marin and Crockett had sparred in the past because the victim had been practicing witchcraft, which Marin saw as contrary to his 'strong' religious beliefs, court records show.

Marin sobbed Thursday as he appeared before a judge via video conference. He is expected back in court on December 1.



Marin is described as a 'heavy drug user' and 'religious zealot'



Victim:
Jacob
Crockett,
19, was
the son of
an
Oklahoma
Highway
Patrol
trooper. He
died at the
scene

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Claim that Jack the Ripper was Polish immigrant is wrong, experts say

05:50 EST, 19 October 2014 |
05:50 EST, 19 October 2014

dailymail.co.uk

Scientists have said evidence which claimed to have unmasked Jack the Ripper is wrong because a decimal point may have been put in the wrong place during calculations to match the killer's delay with his descendants.

Dr Jari Louhelainen, a world-renowned expert in analysing genetic evidence from historical crime scenes, claimed to have found the identity of the notorious killer after he studied DNA on a shawl found near one of the murder victims.

He extracted DNA from the shawl and was able to match it to descendants of the alleged killer, Aaron Kosminski, and one of the Ripper's victims, Catherine Eddowes - ending more than a century of speculation.

However scientists claim that Dr Louhelainen made an 'error of nomenclature' in his analysis and therefore the 126-year-old mystery of the killer's identity still remains.

Scroll down for video



An image depicting police discovering one of the victims of the murders in London which took place in 1888

They suggest Dr Louhelainen may simply have put a decimal point in the wrong place, leading him to mistakenly assume the DNA sequence he found was far more rare than it was and could be matched to descendants.

In fact, they say, the sequence he found could be shared by the majority of the population and therefore cannot be matched to Kosminski - one of the suspects in the string of murders which took place on London's streets more than 100 years ago - or the Ripper's victim.

Kosminski, a Polish immigrant, was believed to have been unmasked as Jack the Ripper.

- Mystery of 100-year-old skull and Australia's first serial killer and onetime Jack the Ripper... Jack the Ripper unmasked: How amateur sleuth used DNA breakthrough to identify Britain's most...
- Did the horrors he witnessed as a boy turn a Polish hairdresser into Jack the Ripper? As a book says...

He was 23 when the murders took place, and living with his two brothers and a sister in

Greenfield Street, just 200 yards from where the third victim, Elizabeth Stride, was killed.

The revelation ended doubt over more than 100 suspects, which included Queen Victoria's grandson – Prince Albert Victor, the Duke of Clarence – the post-Impressionist painter Walter Sickert, and the former Liberal Prime Minister William Gladstone.

Dr Louhelainen, a molecular biologist at Liverpool John Moores University, started work on the case after he was contacted by businessman Russell Edwards, 48, who bought a shawl at auction in 2007. It had been found next to Miss Eddowes and was stained with what was believed to be her blood.



Experts claim errors in the analysis of the DNA mean that claims sequences are linked to those of Catherine Eddowes (left), one of the Ripper's victims, and suspect Aaron Kosminski (right) are wrong

Businessman Russell Edwards bought the shawl in 2007 and published the findings in Naming Jack the



Ripper

DNA breakthrough identified Britain's most notorious criminal

The scientist extracted six fragments of DNA from the shawl using a method called 'vacuuming' because the sample was so old.

This involved using a pipette filled with a special 'buffering' liquid which removes the genetic material without damaging it.

He then used the database at Institute of Legal Medicine to match one with one of her descendants, Karen Miller, the three-times great-granddaughter of Eddowes.

Another DNA fragment was matched to a descendant of Kosminski's sister who has asked not to be identify.

There have been a number of suspects for the Jack the Ripper murders, including Kosminski (above)

A poster calling for the capture of Jack the Ripper, which was published in the Police Gazette in 1888



In a book published by Mr Edwards about the identity of the killer, Dr Louhelainen said the DNA was a global private mutation (314.4C), which occurs at an incredibly rare frequency of 1/290,000. He said he calculated this using the database at Institute of Legal Medicine.

But experts say the mutation in question is actually 315.5C and not rare at all. It would have given a frequency of 1/29,000 at the time of Dr Louhelainen's analysis, as there were 29,000 entries on the database when he did his calculations in 2011.



**JOHN PIZER,
SHOEMAKER**
© Photopress



**GEORGE CHAPMAN,
BARBER**



**AARON KOSMINSKI,
HAIRDRESSER**

JACK THE RIPPER'S VICTIMS IN 1888



**THE DUKE
OF CLARENCE**
© Photopress



**SIR WILLIAM GULL,
SURGEON**



**WALTER SICKERT,
ARTIST**



Mary Ann Nichols was disembowled on Buck's Row.

- Annie Chapman's uterus was removed at 29 Hanbury St.
- Elizabeth Stride's throat was cut at Duffield's Yard, Berner St.
- Catherine Eddowes's uterus and kidney were removed and her cheeks torn on Mitre Square.
- Mary Jane Kelly was completely mutilated and her heart was removed at 13 Miller's Court.

This suggests the decimal point was put in the wrong place, making the sequence far less rare, Sir Alec Jeffreys, the inventor of genetic fingerprinting, told the Independent.

He said: 'If the match frequency really is 90 per cent plus, and not 1/290,000, then obviously there is no significance whatsoever in the match between the shawl and Eddowes' descendant, and the same match would have been seen with almost anyone who had handled the shawl over the years.'

Mannis van Oven, professor of forensic molecular biology at Rotterdam Erasmus University and Hansi Weissensteiner, based at the Institute of Legal Medicine in Innsbruck, have also raised concerns about Dr Louhelainen's study.

A spokesman for the Sidgwick and Jackson, which published the book, said they are investigating the error and that the author stands by the conclusions made.

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On a February morning in 1948, a Clearwater resident was out for a walk on the beach and spied giant footprints on the beach. The tracks were 14 inches long and 11 inches wide and covered 2 miles of beach, before turning into the ocean.

Then the sightings began. Someone described seeing the likes of a giant penguin, 15 feet tall with alligator feet, from a distance. Boaters off the Florida gulf coast reported a penguin-like bird floating in the water. As attention to the Clearwater Monster increased, zoologist Ivan T. Sanderson became interested. He declared that the animal was a giant penguin, which somehow got off track and ended up in Florida. He called it "Florida three-toes."

For 10 years the footprints of the Clearwater Monster appeared on beaches nearby. Many believed it was a hoax, but there was no way to prove it and no one came forward. Finally, in 1988, a *St. Petersburg Times* reporter figured it out. The whole thing was a hoax. The pranksters were Tony Signorini and Al Williams, partners at a Clearwater auto shop.

Newspaper clipping via Orgone Research.



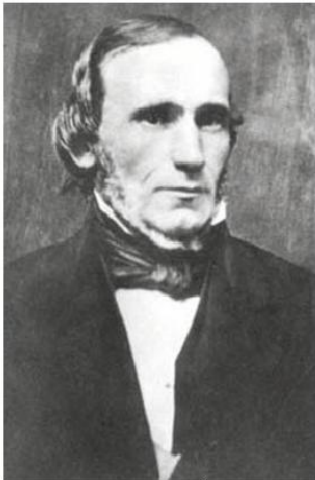
Tony Signorini wearing cast iron feet used in the 1948 Clearwater "monster" hoax. Although the feet were made with dinosaur tracks in mind, Ivan T. Sanderson interpreted them as belonging to a "giant penguin." Now, after 40 years, the case is solved. (Joe Wallis / St. Petersburg Times.)

The Mystery of the Clearwater Monster

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Coffin-Torpedo

From Ohio History Central

*Harrison, John Scott.jpg*

John Scott Harrison

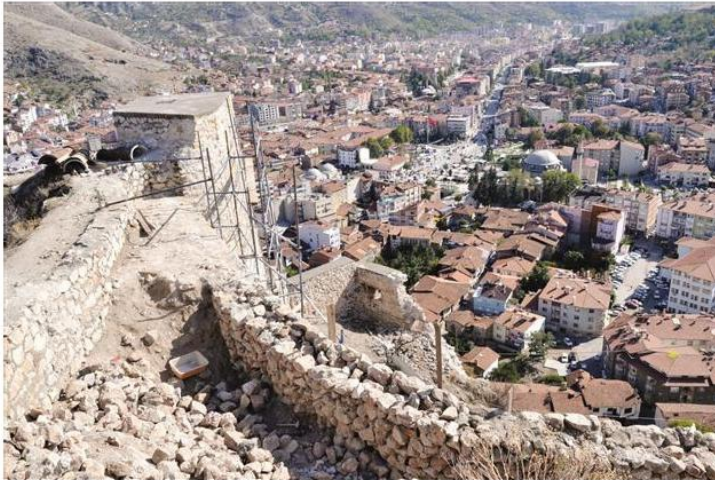
During the 1800s, medical schools routinely stole recently-buried cadavers to demonstrate medical procedures to their students. Cadavers from across Ohio were illegally exhumed for this purpose. Perhaps the most famous person illegally exhumed was John Scott Harrison from Congress Green Cemetery in North Bend, Ohio. Harrison was the son of President William Henry Harrison and the father of President Benjamin Harrison. Family members soon discovered Harrison's body at the Ohio Medical College in Cincinnati, Ohio, and eventually placed the corpse in the Harrison Tomb near his parents' remains.

To prevent grave-robbing from occurring, numerous people tried to develop inventions to deter the robbers. Philip K. Clover of Columbus, Ohio, developed a device that was to "prevent the unauthorized resurrection of dead bodies." Clover named his device the coffin-torpedo. Buried underground, the torpedo would fire several lead balls into the thief. Clover received a patent for this device on October 8, 1878.

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ARCHAEOLOGY - Count Dracula's prison to become tea garden

hurriyetdailynews.com



Count Dracula is believed to have been kept in the dungeons of Tokat Castle, which is undergoing a restoration process to become a tea garden. AA photo



Clues about 'Dracula's captivity' unearthed in Tokat

Tokat Castle, where Wallachian Prince Vlad III the Impaler, also known as Count Dracula, is said to have been held captive in the early 15th century, will be turned into a tea garden.

Provincial Culture and Tourism Director Abdurrahman Akyüz said the Roman-era castle was believed to have been built in the fifth or sixth century, adding that the castle served as a prison during Ottoman times.

"Tokat Castle is built on sheer slopes for defense and overlooks the city. Later in the Ottoman period, it was used as a prison. Notable prisoners were kept here. It is also rumored that Count Dracula stayed in the dungeon there for seven years," he said.

Akyüz said restoration works had been initiated on the castle some time ago with the support of Tokat Gov. Cevdet Can and were still continuing. When the works are done, the castle, located in the Black Sea province of Tokat, will serve as a tourist attraction, he added.

Akyüz said the walls and bastions of the castle would be reinforced to prevent falling stones. "We are working to reinforce the wall."

He said the castle would serve as a tea garden and that visitors would be able to drink their tea overlooking the centuries-old museums in Sulusokak, Arastalı Bedesten, Yağlıbasan Madrasah, Takekciler Mosque and Alamescit.

Vlad III lived between 1431 and 1476. Most historians say he was kept in captivity in Romania. The exact length of his period of captivity is open to debate, though indications are that it was from 1462 to 1474.

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Cursed Ancient Statue: The Goddess of Death, c. 3500 BC

This curious limestone statue was unearthed at Lemb (Lempa), Cyprus in 1878. It has earned the nickname 'Goddess of Death' but its actual name is the 'Women from Lemb'. Dating from 3500 BC, its real purpose is unknown but it may have been a fertility statue or a representation of a goddess whose name has been lost to time. This little innocuous looking statue has become famous for the deadly effect it has had on each of its owners.

The statue has belonged to at least four different families and each one has suffered a great amount of tragedy after acquiring the piece. Lord Elphont was the first owner. Within six years of buying the statue, all seven of his family members passed away. The second owner, Ivor Menucci and his whole family died within four years of attaining the statue. The third owner, Lord Thompson-Noel, suffered the death of his whole family also within 4 years. The statue eventually ended up as property of Sir Alan Biverbrook and he, his wife, and their two daughters were the next to die.

To try and stop the curse from harming anyone else, Biverbrook's two surviving sons donated the statue to the Royal Scottish Museum in Edinburgh. After that, the museum curator who handled the statue died within a year. Today, the Women from Lemb statue remains tucked away safely behind glass at the museum where it can't cause any more harm...hopefully.

The village of Lempa ([map](#)) is one of the most ancient in Cyprus. It is believed to have been first settled in the Chalcolithic Period (c. 3800–2500 BC), and a number of cruciform female figurines like this one, have been found from this era.

Cursed By Allah

There was an interesting post on alt.folklore.urban discussing several examples of Muslim hoaxes alleging there have been people who were recently cursed by Allah, for one reason or another, and transformed into bizarre animals.

For instance, Arabic newspapers ran one story about a girl who threw the Quran at her mother and was transformed into a large, rat-like creature. (The story became a popular video as well.) An image (below) accompanied the story, showing what the girl had become.



In reality, the image of the rat-like creature was lifted from an art exhibit titled "Leather Landscape" by Patricia Piccinini.

posted a statement online disavowing any knowledge of how the 'cursed' story originated and expressing sympathy for anyone disturbed by it.



A second story circulating in Arabic-language

communities (via a youtube video) details the case of a girl who kicked the Quran and was transformed into an ugly mermaid-like creature. In reality, the creature shown is a guitar fish.



If the punishment for kicking or throwing the Quran is to be transformed into an animal, then what's the punishment for making bizarre stuff up to scare people?

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via **Feedburner**

"... then what's the punishment for making bizarre stuff up to scare

people?"

Good question. You know, there's actually no prohibition in the Quran of throwing the book itself (not that I'm advocating throwing books), whereas lying IS prohibited.

Posted by Big Gary in Palestine, Texas on Wed Aug 27, 2008 at 06:54 PM

I want to be transformed into a weird animal! Someone, give me a Quran.

Posted by Sakano in Ohio on Wed Aug 27, 2008 at 07:38 PM

what's the punishment for making bizarre stuff up to scare people?

Becoming a religion?

J/P=?

Posted by John Paradox in Tucson, AZ on Wed Aug 27, 2008 at 08:11 PM

It's always terrific fun to deal with the "anything that I do, no matter how ghastly and depraved, is totally justified if I do it in the name of God" people. They're a plague to the non-religious, and they are also an embarrassment to those religious people (who are the vast majority) who actually bother to develop a sense of morality.

Posted by Accipiter on Wed Aug 27, 2008 at 10:22 PM

Ummmm . . . Is it bad that I actually rather like the look of the rat-girl? She kinda looks cute. .
.

And after all, to get to the main poitn of the articel, is this any stranger than some of the more bizarre claims of the eco-warriors, like the idea that DDT causes cancer and human diseases?

Posted by DFStuckey in Auckland New Zealand on Wed Aug 27, 2008 at 11:31 PM

I think the rat person is cute too. But then again, I also think actual rats are cute, they're my favorite animals.

Posted by Sakano in Ohio on Thu Aug 28, 2008 at 12:37 AM

Oh, yeah. Transmogrification as a concept in the hands of primitive religious zealots. That's a belief that sends shivers down my spine.

Posted by KDP in Madill, OK on Thu Aug 28, 2008 at 11:40 AM

Intrigued, I found a Quran for my own testing purposes and kicked it up and down my

hallway.
Nothing happened.
Not a thing.
I love research.
Posted by Lee on Thu Aug 28, 2008 at 11:39 PM

Erm.. Im starting to grow fins...
O.o
Posted by Lee on Fri Aug 29, 2008 at 04:54 AM

as a Muslim, I agree that lying IS prohibited, and that these people who did such hoaxes to scare another Muslim (or other people) should be punished
Posted by Musaspot in Malaysia on Sat Sep 06, 2008 at 08:18 PM

well.. the purpose of each of these stories is for people not to underestimate Quran. I am a muslim.. and if i want my kids to grow up carrying respect to their religion i would tell them such stories.. only a little less scary! but it has gone too far with all the pictures and videos and such stuff. and as for the person who previously stated that he/she has kicked a Quran as an experiment i would only say one thing.. if this is your sense of humor.. shame on you. this is very disrespectful. :S
Posted by QNoory on Sat Sep 13, 2008 at 07:31 PM

I wipe my butt with the Koran every Sept. 11 and "allah" hasn't cursed me yet. Unless you count hemorrhoids.
Posted by Bob Smythe in USA on Mon Sep 15, 2008 at 07:51 PM

you know bob.. i can answer back.. but i am more civilized than that. you are obviously not. so good luck with everything. and good luck with your hemorrhoids.
Posted by QNoory on Mon Sep 15, 2008 at 08:14 PM

Bob from Carlsbad pukes word vomit on blogs across the world... leave him to his hemorrhoids; its all he has!
Posted by me in USA on Tue Sep 30, 2008 at 09:49 PM

all you people have some respect for your self and for muslims
Posted by omor in england on Mon Jan 26, 2009 at 10:14 AM

lisen bob and lee u knw ya fink ya sum top shot i'd rate you to come and step up 2 my face and say that, you dirty shits that dnt clean themeselves should tke d mik outta muslims. you fink that you could say whatever yu like behind the computer screens and think youll get away wit it, i guarntee ya yud regret that you actually made that comment. and if you was to say that in public you wouldt be reading my message eneweis best of luck ya kafur.

brought to you by Bob's and lee's grandparents
even where against ya..... tudulle tooo
Posted by BOB'S NAN!! in kafur twm on Fri Feb 20, 2009 at 07:55 PM

Nirah Heem' (excuse my spellings) (ALLAH THE MOST BENEIFICIAL AND THE MOST MERCIFUL! There is NO GOD BUT ALLAH, Mohammed (pbuh) is the messenger of ALLAH! 'La Ilaha Ilulah Mohammed Durh Rasoo lulallah'('ALLAH HU AKHBAR' (ALLAH IS THR GREATEST)

These are ALLAH dua's that we say, and read in order 2 pray and respect our GOD and profets! ALLAH is the GREATEST! and has the power 2 do as they plead! AMEEN!
Posted by Souljah of Allah (The almighty) in Allah World on Mon Apr 20, 2009 at 07:18 PM

I think having her artwork appropriated is an appropriate punishment for having a website that resizes my browser window.
Posted by ekcol on Sat Jun 06, 2009 at 09:40 AM

Muslims believe they must respect the Quran. All the power to them.

I am not muslim so I feel no need to respect the Quran and NO ONE can force me to. I won't overtly provoke muslims by disrespecting the Quran in their presence, I am, after all, civil. But I do take offense at Muslims (or Christians, or Jews, or Hindus, etc) having the audacity and bigotry to tell me what I can and cannot do with any book that belongs to me. (I own several Qurans, Bibles, Torahs, Bhagavad Gitas, Popol Vuhs, etc, and I'll do whatever I damn well please with them) Suffice it to say, if any of these religious mythologies were true, I'd be a bug-eyed simian horse shoe crab.

BTW, the Quran used today is not the one that was "revealed" to Mohamed, but was the final compilation approved by Uthman ibn Affan, third Caliph of the Rashidun Empire (644 to 656)
Posted by YolandaD in USA on Mon Jun 15, 2009 at 10:29 PM

There's no way that woman got transformed into an animal. I don't believe it!

I'm a Muslim, and I strongly hope that the ones that came up with this idea get punished sooner or later cuz they deserve it!
Posted by blog about islamic blog in Sweden on Thu Dec 31, 2009 at 02:21 PM

Allah would change every person to animals, then why would we need Judgement Day?
Posted by Heydar on Tue Jun 15, 2010 at 01:53 AM

Photos up dated are 000001% true....
Ppl who updated d pics suck 2 d core...
It me tell u abt quran .

Quran is a fake book
It has oly false teachings
Ppl who r reading it r suckers
Inside d book Der is oly kamasutra.i.e. sex positions

Just nw I kicked and tore a quran but nothing happened

Let me tell u & the dirty Islamic ppl ole thing. Quran is a fake book containing oly abt sex ... don't read it....

And a special thanks to bob and lee ... "tnx guys 4 trying d research".... I think we must try wiping our shit wit it..

On d whole. Quran & Islam suck 2 d core..

Posted by deepak in India on Sat Aug 28, 2010 at 08:55 AM

Such a well reasoned and logical argument and such excellent English, Deepak, you obviously are wasted in that telephone service centre. You should move to the States and join the Log Cabin Republicans

 smi Posted by D F Stuckey in Auckland New Zealand on Sat Aug 28, 2010 at 08:58 AM

Stuckey, you grabbed the words right out of my mouth :D

Deepak, how old are you, kid??

you should AT LEAST consider using proper grammar and spelling when you're trying to prove you have an opinion..

 rasq Posted by Nory on Sat Aug 28, 2010 at 12:51 PM

Fena, if you're goign to talk to people around the world, you should learn the English language first, and then try and come up with better thought out opinions.

Otherwise, we will think that you are a either a mindless Chav or a Member of Parliament.

Posted by D F Stuckey in Auckland New Zealand on Thu Sep 02, 2010 at 07:39 AM

but its a video.....how wil they ever join parts of different animals and move it:O....

Posted by hari on Sun Sep 05, 2010 at 04:10 AM

Comments: Page 1 of 2 pages 1 2 >

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De Situ Britanniae

In 1747 word of a major new historical discovery reached England. Charles Bertram (1723-65), a 24-year-old English teacher in Denmark, had found an ancient manuscript and accompanying map, titled *De Situ Britanniae*, that detailed the layout of roads and settlements in Roman Britain.

The material caused a buzz of excitement amongst antiquarians because it revealed numerous Roman landmarks whose existence had not been previously known and suggested the existence of an entire unknown Roman province. But in fact, the map and manuscript turned out to be one of the greatest forgeries of the century.

The fraud began when Bertram wrote to William Stukeley (1687-1765), a famous British antiquarian, informing him of the existence of the manuscript and map. With encouragement from Stukeley, Bertram made a "careful copy" of the material and sent it to Stukeley. The original was never sent (and never seen).

Stukeley then published a monograph theorizing that the map was the work of a 14th century monk from Westminster named Richard of Cirencester. For over one hundred years, this theory went unquestioned until the German historian Karl Wex discovered that much of the manuscript had been lifted from a variety of 16th century sources. In 1866 B.R. Woodward and J.E.B. Mayer published a more thorough debunking of the map, revealing it to be based upon "a mosaic of information collected from Caesar, Tacitus, Solinus, Camden and other authorities."

In hindsight it then became obvious that the manuscript and map were amateurish forgeries. It was only the authority of Stukeley that had lent them credence.

In the meantime, information gleaned from *De Situ Britanniae* had made its way into an enormous variety of sources, including history books and maps of the British Royal Ordnance Survey. It took decades to correct all this information and finally set the historical record straight.

- Mark Jones (ed.), *Fake? The Art of Deception*, University of California Press, 1990: page 66.

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- Oct 11, 2014 11:37
- By Glen Keogh



Google Maps / Getty

A randy burglar was caught after he had sex with a teddy bear while raiding a shed - and police discovered his DNA inside the toy.

Paul Mountain, 38, said he was coming down from amphetamines and felt an 'overwhelming need' for sexual relief, the Lancashire Telegraph reports.

It is believed he cut a hole inside the defenceless bear before getting down to business.

Blackburn Magistrates Court heard that the owner of an allotment found a shed had been broken into and the contents were spread all around.

On the floor among the wreckage she found the teddy bear - used and abused.

Prosecutor, Domenic Howells said: "The teddy bear was passed to the police and semen found inside came back to this defendant.

"He told officers he was coming down off amphetamine and felt overwhelming need for sexual relief."

The warped crook, of Darwen, Lancs, pleaded guilty to burglary with intent to steal and was bailed for the preparation of a pre-sentence report.

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A jaunt on a stolen train Thursday ended in a crash and possible federal felony charges for the 22-year-old driver.

Derek Skyler Brux was charged Friday with reckless endangering, felony destruction of property and felony destruction, obstruction or removal of railroad track or fixtures after allegedly stealing a train from North Antelope Rochelle mine and driving it south 13 miles before plowing it into another train.

Deputies were called out to the mine at about 8:55 a.m. Thursday.

The incident started when Brux, a utility coal operator for Rail Link, allegedly became upset about his supervisor's response to working conditions, according to an affidavit of probable cause filed in Circuit Court.

The disgruntled employee then unhooked some cars and drove the locomotive around what is described as a "loop" at the site and "pretty much squashed the 'expletive' outta their scales," Brux said, according to the affidavit.

Brux then called his supervisor and asked her if she wanted to play chicken, the affidavit says. He hung up the phone and then called the rail dispatch, advising personnel there he was going onto the main rail line.

Brux said he estimated he was going 60 mph for about 15 minutes before plowing through switch 1. He told deputies he did not know where he was headed and that he wanted to make Rail Link pay, the affidavit says.

Brux said he headed south on the main line. When asked how fast he was going, the affidavit says he responded that he didn't know if he "quite got up to 70 mph," but estimated he was going 50 mph for a good part of the trip.

Employees from Peabody Energy Corp. and Burlington Northern Santa Fe LLC. Attempted to stop the locomotive between rail mile markers 53 and 58 but were unsuccessful, according to the affidavit.

At least one person, Royce Biegler, was reported to be working on the train tracks at the time of the incident, the affidavit says. When Biegler heard Brux call dispatch and say he going on the main line, Biegler moved his pickup off the track before the oncoming train arrived.

No injuries were reported.

At some point in his journey, Brux ran through another switch and eventually passed through an area where construction was occurring near a highway crossing somewhere between North Antelope and South Antelope.

Brux told deputies he blew his horn while passing and said that there were "a lot of workers

there," the affidavit says. When asked if he scared the workers Brux said, "They were probably (expletive) scared. They probably (expletive) themselves. Whatever."

During the ride, Rail Link employees tried contacting Brux on his employee phone, Brux told investigators. He got mad and said was not an Apple fan and smashed the phone for something to do.

He took the train to Nacco Junction before backing out onto the main line and approaching a train on track 1 near an oil field crossing, according to the affidavit. Brux finally crashed the train into another at NACCO Junction on BNSF rail mile marker 62.5.

"I wanted to see what it was like to hit something, so I hit at it," Brux said, according to the affidavit. Brux then backed up and hit the train again. He estimates the speed of both collisions was under 10 mph.

Kerby Caves, a Rail Link Employee, arrived at the scene of the crash as Brux was attempting to leave the area, the affidavit says. Caves hit the emergency shut-off switch on the fuel tank, disabling the train.

Brux then fled on foot toward a treeline before being caught by deputies. He stated that he was having a bad day and trying to prove a point. When asked if he had thought about taking his own life, Brux replied, "a couple of times."

The affidavit reports Brux said he would do so by hitting "another train, putting possibly other lives in danger ..."

The total cost of the damages is not known. One switch is valued at about \$50,000. The cost of the two BNSF and one Union Pacific locomotive was not available, nor was the cost of the other switch, rail line or the mine scales damaged during his joyride, affidavit says.

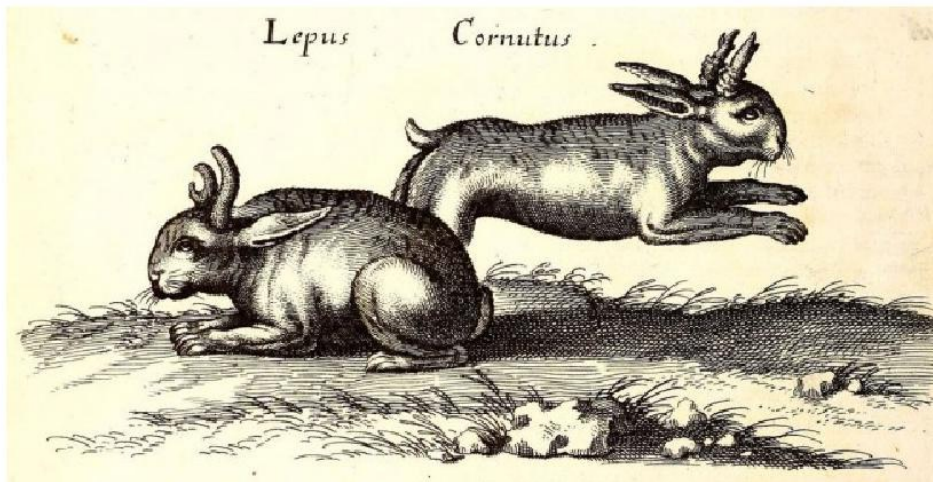
Reckless endangering is a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment up to one year, a fine up to \$750 or both. Felony destruction of property is punishable by imprisonment of not more than 10 years, a fine of up to \$10,000 or both. Destruction, obstruction or removal of railroad track or fixtures is a felony punishable by a imprisonment of not less than one year and not more than 20 years, a fine of up to \$10,000 or both.

Brux could also face additional federal charges from the Federal Railroad Administration.

Posted on *Friday, October 10, 2014 5:38 pm.*

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The horned rabbit (*Lepus cornutus*) appears in 1650's *Historiae Naturalis de Quadrupetibus Libri*, meaning *The History Book of Natural Quadrangles*. Look at me now, Latin teacher from college who gave me bad grades. Source: Biodiversity Heritage Library

Having grown up in the '90s in the suburbs of San Francisco, my first encounter with the wily jackalope was not in the wild. It was on the show *America's Funniest People*, in which a recurring skit starred a hilariously unrealistic rabbit puppet with the horns of an antelope and the habits of a sociopath.

It's OK to be wrong, even fantastically so, because when it comes to understanding our world, mistakes mean progress. From folklore to pure science, these are humankind's most bizarre theories.

That puppet made a big impression on me. For the uninitiated, the show's jackalope stories revolved around the creature assaulting humans—whether they deserved it or not—typically jabbing them in the bum with its horns. This was not, however, the first time the jackalope has been sighted in the United States. The critter has long been a fixture in American folklore. But as it turns out, the jackalope isn't purely a work of fiction.

Back in the 1800s in the wilds of Wyoming, when cowboys sang to their cattle on dark nights before thunderstorms, they heard their tunes repeated back to them. Not by the cattle—that would just be silly—but by some jackalope off in the brush. That bit about the nighttime before thunderstorms wasn't for dramatic effect, by the way. This was the only time the jackalope would call out.

It's notoriously difficult to capture a jackalope. Here, a rare cornered specimen. *Image: Wikimedia*

The first "confirmed" jackalope specimen was secured by one Douglas Herrick, who in 1932 found a dead one sprawled in his shop in Douglas, Wyoming. If you want to get technical, though, it was an ordinary dead rabbit next to some deer horns on the floor. But Herrick mounted the rabbit, horns and all, thus begetting a slew of taxidermic jackalopes in bars all across the West.



Next to bigfoot, it is now perhaps the most iconic American creature of legend. But this is far from a mythical critter of American invention. A horned hare appears in an early-17th century work of natural history, and in another in the mid-1700s—not to mention that a rabbit with a single unicorn-like horn showed up in a Persian geographic dictionary 500 years earlier. Americans may have given the jackalope a persona, but could it be that the creature has indeed hopped the world over?

Yes, but those are no horns. They're tumors.

In the 1930s, an American scientist procured the horns of such a critter for testing, as Carl Zimmer recounts in his book *A Planet of Viruses*. The scientist had a hunch that a virus was causing these bizarre growths, so he ground up the horns and made a solution, then filtered it so only viruses could get through. He then applied the theoretically virus-packed liquid to the heads of otherwise healthy rabbits, and sure enough they grew horns as well.

He had discovered the cancer-causing Shope papillomavirus, a strain related to the human papillomavirus, or HPV. Whereas HPV corrupts cells in the human cervix to build cancerous tumors, in rabbits the papillomavirus manifests as hard, keratinized horns. When observers in antiquity saw horned rabbits, they were in fact seeing the ravages of carcimonas brought on by viral infections. These growths are isolated on the critter's head and face, though not necessarily to the top of the skull. Afflicted rabbits can in fact grow them around their mouths and starve to death, unable to feed.

Such papillomaviruses are found throughout the animal kingdom, from birds to reptiles to mammals. But how could this virus jump between totally unrelated species? Well, it almost never does. And the answer to why these viruses are so widespread is actually far more interesting than if they could indeed just move from species to species willy-nilly.



cap

An unfortunate bunny infected with the Shope papillomavirus. *Image: Wikimedia*

It's theorized that papillomaviruses are so common because they first took up residence in a common ancestor of birds and mammals and reptiles some 300 million years ago, then followed each subsequent branching of the tree of life, evolving separately in each species. And as, say, mammals like rabbits eventually evolved skin, their virus coevolved to exploit that tissue.

And so it is that the mythical jackalope is far from just silly myth-making (and profitability for imaginative taxidermists across the American West, not to mention the producers of *America's Funniest People*). It's a great lesson in

evolutionary biology.

So the next time you're in a watering hole out West and see a jackalope on the wall, buy it a stiff drink. It's seen better days. Specifically, if you find yourself in San Francisco's jackalope-infested bar Dalva, drop me a line and you can buy me one too. Or, like, three or four. Whatever works for your budget.

Reference:

Zimmer, C. (2011) A Planet of Viruses. University of Chicago Press

Homepage image: Chase Swift/Corbis

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Dolphin reveals an extra set of 'legs'

By Hiroko Tabuchi

11/6/2006 3:44:51 PM ET

nbcnews.com

Japanese researchers said Sunday that a bottlenose dolphin captured last month has an extra set of fins that could be the remains of hind legs, a discovery that may provide further evidence that ocean-dwelling mammals once lived on land.

Fishermen captured the four-finned dolphin alive off the coast of Wakayama prefecture in western Japan on Oct. 28, and alerted the nearby Taiji Whaling Museum, according to museum director Katsuki Hayashi.

Fossil remains show dolphins and whales were four-footed land animals about 50 million years ago and share the same common ancestor as hippos and deer. Scientists believe they later transitioned to an aquatic lifestyle and their hind limbs disappeared.

Whale and dolphin fetuses also show signs of hind protrusions but these generally disappear before birth.

Though odd-shaped protrusions have been found near the tails of dolphins and whales captured in the past, researchers say this was the first time one had been found with well-developed, symmetrical fins, Hayashi said.



AP

"I believe the fins may be remains from the time when dolphins' ancient ancestors lived on land ... this is an unprecedented discovery," Seiji Osumi, an adviser at Tokyo's Institute of Cetacean Research, said at a news conference televised Sunday.

The second set of fins — much smaller than the dolphin's front fins — are about the size of human hands and protrude from near the tail on the dolphin's underside. The dolphin measures 8.92 feet (2.7 meters) and is about five years old, according to the museum.

Hayashi said he could not tell from watching the dolphin swim in a museum tank whether it used its back fins to maneuver.

This photo, released by the Taiji Whale Museum, highlights the extra set of fins. The tail is being held by a diver whose hand is visible at upper left.

A freak mutation may have caused the ancient trait to reassert itself, Osumi said. The dolphin will be kept at the Taiji museum to undergo X-ray and DNA tests, according to Hayashi.

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Updated November 8, 2006

Japanese fishers have found an unusual bottlenose dolphin with an extra set of fins that could be an evolutionary throwback to the time when the marine mammals' ancient ancestors walked on land.

The dolphin was captured alive off the southwestern coast of Japan on October 28. It was then shipped to the nearby Taiji Whaling Museum for study (map of Japan).



Bottlenose dolphin photo

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While environmentalists decry the town of Taiji's annual practice of dolphin fishing and capture, this particular catch appears to be a genuine scientific find.

"This is an unprecedented discovery," Seiji Osumi of Tokyo's Institute of Cetacean Research said in a weekend press conference.

"I believe the fins may be remains from a time when dolphins' ancient ancestors lived on land," Osumi told reporters.

Scott Baker, associate director of the marine mammal program at Oregon State University in Corvallis, agreed, saying that "this certainly is direct evidence of evolution."

Ancestral Genes

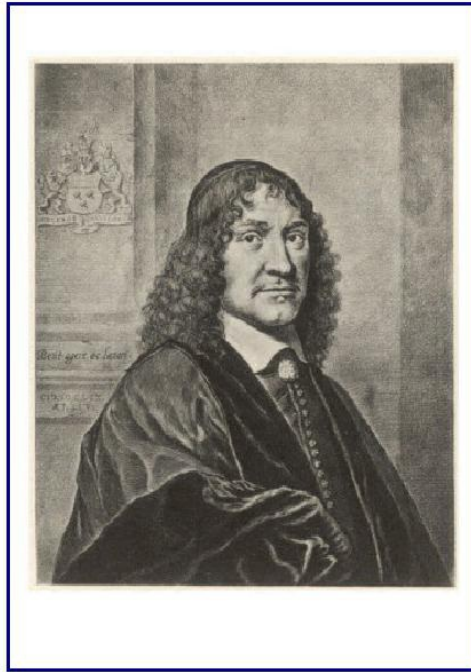
Dolphins normally have two fins that are structurally similar to other mammals' arms or front legs. But the recently discovered dolphin also has a pair of stubbier, symmetrical fins near its tail.

"This is what you would call an atavistic trait"—a genetic trait that appears to be an evolutionary throwback—Baker told National Geographic News.

The dolphin's extra fins are "an ancestral characteristic that has reemerged for some reason," Baker said.

"Humans occasionally are born with excessive hair—the so-called werewolf gene—so we look more like our ancestral form shared with apes."

(Get an overview of human genetics.)



Dr. Sylvius' Special Medicine,

In the mid 17th century a Dutch physician and alchemist named Fransiscus Sylvius (born Franz de la Boe) was perhaps one of the most learned men of his time. Throughout his life he accomplished many great works, founding his own hospital, proposing a theory that the human body worked through chemical reactions, and conducting groundbreaking studies on human anatomy. In fact his studies on the structure of the brain led to the discovery of two brain structures named after him; the Sylvian Fissure and the Sylvian Aqueduct.

However it was in the mid 16th century that Dr. Sylvius' would create his most important invention, a special medicine that is still popular today. His medicine was made from distilled malt wine, but due to its bitter flavor he sweetened it with the oil from juniper berries. His new medicine was sold all over the Netherlands, being used to treat stomach ailments, kidney ailments, gout, gall stones, and lumbago. Dr. Sylvius called his new medicine *jenever*. Today jenever is as popular as ever, although it is no longer consumed for medicinal benefits and is better known by its modern name, *gin*.

Drunken zombie Santa wakes in strangers' St. Paul home, police say

Posted: 10/13/2014 12:01:00 AM CDT | Updated: a day ago

twincities.com

An intoxicated stranger dressed as a zombie Santa Claus terrified two teenagers when he entered their St. Paul home over the weekend.

A 14-year-old boy fled from the Macalester-Groveland house to get help and his 16-year-old sister locked herself in a bathroom, said a neighbor, Margaret Marrinan, who is also a Ramsey County judge.

"This guy ought to be examining his conscience ... for what he did to those kids," she said.

The children were scared but are fine now, Tom Sullivan, their father, said Monday.

"The police did a nice job of calming them down and explaining the individual meant no harm," he said. "Fortunately, it had a happy ending, and no one will ever think of Santa the same way. If you're going to have a break-in, this is the best kind -- someone who means no harm and was looking for a place to sleep."

A Zombie Pub Crawl started in Minneapolis at 4 p.m. that day. Saturday was also homecoming at St. Thomas, though there was no zombie theme, a university spokesman said.

Officers were called to a home in the area of Sargent and Cretin avenues at 9:45 p.m. Saturday. They were told that a man had entered the residence wearing a Santa suit and looking like a zombie, said Sgt. Paul Paulos, a St. Paul police spokesman.

The man had vomited and didn't know where he was when police woke him up, Paulos said.

Police cited Brock Quinn Johnson of Roseville for trespassing and took him to the detoxification center, Paulos said. Johnson declined to comment Monday.

Marrinan was home Saturday night when she and her husband heard loud yelling coming from outside. It was a 14-year-old boy who lives on the block, and she said that "he was just beside himself," yelling, "Help!"

"What had happened was so sudden and so unexpected, I think he was sort of in a state of shock," Marrinan said. "I've never heard yelling that loud. I couldn't believe he had the lung power to shout as loudly as he did."

When Marrinan and her husband went to the door, the boy told them, "This guy came into our house, he's dressed like Santa and he has a zombie head," Marrinan said. She said they had the reaction of, "What? Say that again?"

The boy had already called 911 from a cellphone. "This kid is really a together kind of kid who did exactly what he should do," Marrinan said, adding that he was on the verge of hysterics

because of concern for his sister.

Sullivan and his wife had been out in the neighborhood and the door to the home was closed, but not locked, he said. The boy was washing dishes when he heard the door open.

"He comes to say 'Hi' to his parents and here's Santa the zombie," Marrinan said. "He freaked out, yelled to his sister, and ran out the back of the house."

The girl locked herself in a bathroom with a cellphone and called her parents, who quickly returned to the house, Marrinan said.

Marrinan said she saw the man when he was brought to a squad car and the boy's description was right -- he was dressed like Santa and looked like a zombie. He wasn't wearing a mask, and Marrinan suspected that makeup caused the zombie effect.

Sullivan and Marrinan said their block, south of St. Thomas, is normally quiet.

The university recently apologized for "noise, disruption and negativity that some neighbors immediately north and east of campus experienced" on the weekend of the football game against St. John's University.

"UST has fielded a number of complaints, a handful of kudos and the beginnings of some real engagement -- among offices on campus and with neighbors -- in working together on solutions to the problems of noise, rowdy partying and public drunkenness," the university emailed neighbors and posted on its website Oct. 2.

The university noted that neighbors to the south and west of campus reported "their weekend generally was quieter than in years past" and that "the vast majority of our students are studious, law-abiding and, yes, fun-loving young people who know how to have a good time without disrespecting others' rights."

Emu corralled after jaunt through traffic

By Associated Press
October 14

washingtonpost.com



An Emu is squirted with water to keep it from fighting with another Emu behind a fence Tuesday, Oct. 14, 2014, in Tustin. Tustin police and Orange County Animal Control officers responded to a report of an Emu running around on the street near Main Street and El Camino Real. By the time they got there, neighbors had safely corralled the big bird and returned it to a pen it shares with two other emus in a backyard of a home. (Orange County Register, Sam Gangwer/Associated Press)

TUSTIN, Calif. — It's not every day you see a 6-foot-tall bird running in traffic.

But Tustin police say that was the report Tuesday morning when an emu got loose from a backyard pen.

The Orange County Register (<http://bit.ly/1trRZVY>) says officers were called to a quiet residential area shortly before 11:30 a.m.

By the time they got there, neighbors had safely corralled the big bird and returned it to a pen it shares with two other emus.

A police statement says there was no threat to public safety.

The emu is a flightless Australian bird that resembles an ostrich. It's the second-largest bird in the world after the ostrich and can sprint at up to 30 mph.

Authorities say it's legal to own emus in Orange County with the proper zoning.

Information from: The Orange County Register, <http://www.ocregister.com>

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9,500-year-old Shigir Idol could 'could hold a message to modern man'

05:55 EST, 22 October 2014 |

dailymail.co.uk

Scientists in Germany are closer to dating an ancient wooden statue which they say contains secret encrypted codes written around 9,500 years ago - possibly the oldest on the planet.

The haunting Shigir Idol is twice as old as the Egyptian pyramids and was preserved 'as if in a time capsule' in a peat bog on the western fringes of Siberia.

Now Russian experts say the remarkable relic contains encoded information on the 'creation of the world' - a message to modern man from the Mesolithic era of the Stone Age.



Scientists in Germany are close to dating an ancient wooden statue which they say contains secret encrypted codes written around 9,500 years ago - possibly the oldest on the planet

'German scientists are now close to a precise dating - within five decades - of the remarkable artifact, which is a stunning example of ancient man's creativity,' reported The Siberian Times

'The results are likely to be known in late February or early March.'

The idol, 'scraped' using a 'stone spoon' from larch timber, is around 4,000 to 5,000 years older than Britain's world famous

Stonehenge monument.

It stands 9.2ft (2.8 metres) in height but originally was 17.4ft (5.3 metres) tall, as high as a two storey house.



The haunting Shigir Idol is twice as old as the Egyptian pyramids and was preserved 'as if in a time capsule' in a peat bog on the western fringes of Siberia

THE SHIGIR IDOL: KEY FACTS

The Shigir Idol is thought to be the most ancient wooden sculpture in the world.

The haunting idol is twice as old as the Egyptian pyramids and was preserved 'as if in a time



capsule' in a peat bog

It was made during the Mesolithic period, around 7,500 BCE but was only discovered in 1890 in Kirovgrad, Sverdlovsk region, in the Ural Mountains.

It stands 9.2ft (2.8 metres) in height but originally was 17.4ft (5.3 metres) tall, as high as a two storey house.

Almost 6.5ft (2 metres) of the artefact went missing during Russian's 20th century political turmoil, though Siberian archaeologist Vladimir Tolmachev drew images of all the pieces.

The messages carved into the ornament 'remain 'an utter mystery to modern man', according to experts.

Some say the straight lines could denote land, or horizon - the boundary between earth and sky, water and sky, or the borderline between the worlds.

A wavy line or zigzag symbolised the watery element, snake, lizard, or determined a certain border.

But the marks could have multiple meanings for the ancient statue-makers who gave the idol seven faces, only one of which is three-dimensional.

The faces may be images of spirits that inhabited the human world in ancient times.

Almost 6.5ft (2 metres) of the artefact went missing during Russian's 20th century political turmoil, though Siberian archaeologist Vladimir Tolmachev drew images of all the pieces.

German pre-historian Professor Thomas Terberger said: 'There is no such ancient sculpture in the whole of Europe.

'Studying this Idol is a dream come true.'

Professor Mikhail Zhilin, leading researcher of the Russian Academy of Sciences' Institute of Archeology, explained: 'We study the Idol with a feeling of awe.

'This is a masterpiece, carrying gigantic emotional value and force.

'It is a unique sculpture, there is nothing else in the world like this. It is very alive, and very complicated at the same time.

'The ornament is covered with nothing but encrypted information. People were passing on

knowledge with the help of the Idol.'

While the messages remain 'an utter mystery to modern man', the Russian academic said its creators 'lived in total harmony with the world, had advanced intellectual development, and a complicated spiritual world'.

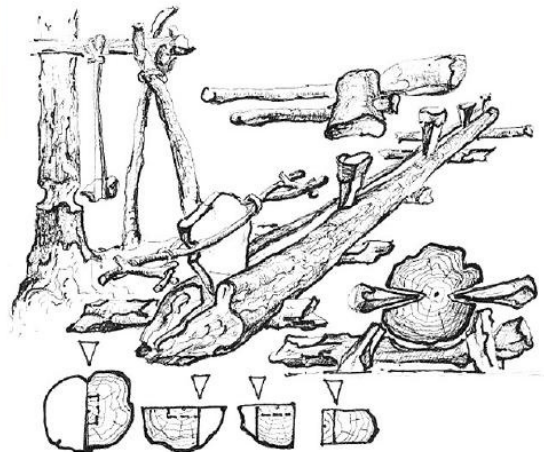
Svetlana Savchenko, chief keeper of Shigir Idol at Yekaterinburg History Museum, concludes that 'a straight line could denote land, or horizon - the boundary between earth and sky, water and sky, or the borderline between the worlds.

'A wavy line or zigzag symbolised the watery element, snake, lizard, or determined a certain border.

'In addition, the zigzag signaled danger, like a pike. Cross, rhombus, square, circle depicted the fire or the sun, and so on.'



The Shigir Idol stands 9.2ft (2.8 metres) in height but originally was 17.4ft (5.3 metres) tall, as high as a two storey house. Almost 6.5ft (2 metres) of the artefact went missing during Russian's 20th century political turmoil, though Siberian archaeologist Vladimir Tolmachev drew images of all the pieces



The idol, 'scraped' using a 'stone spoon' from larch timber, is around 4,000 to 5,000 years older than Britain's world famous Stonehenge monument. Pictured is an illustration of how it may have been created

While the messages remain 'an utter mystery to modern man', the Russian academic said its creators 'lived in total harmony with the world, had advanced intellectual development, and a complicated spiritual world'. Pictured is a building of Urals history museum in 1910 in which the relic is held



© Ekaterina Osinteva/The Siberian Times

But the marks could have multiple meanings for the ancient statue-makers who gave the idol seven faces, only one of which is three-dimensional.

'If these are images of spirits that inhabited the human world in ancient times, the vertical position of figures (one above the other) probably relate to their hierarchy,' said author Petr Zolin.

'Images on the front and back planes of the Idol, possibly indicate that they belong to

different worlds.

'If there are depicted myths about the origin of humans and the world, the vertical arrangement of the images may reflect the sequence of events. Ornaments can be special signs which mark something as significant.'

Mr Savchenko argues that the idol tells the story of the 'creation of the world' as understood by Mesolithic man.

Professor Uwe Hoysner, from Berlin Archaeological Institute added: 'The idol is carved from larch, which, as we see by the annual rings, was at least 159 years old.

'The samples we selected contain important information about the isotopes that correspond to the time when the tree grew.'

The peat protected the larch wood. The Idol was found in 1890 in Kirovgrad, Sverdlovsk region, in the Ural Mountains.



© Ekaterina Osinteva/The Siberian Times

The marks could have multiple meanings for the ancient statue-makers who gave the idol seven faces, only one of which is three-dimensional



- Is this the world's oldest secret code?

Expelled Nazis were paid millions in Social Security benefits, probe finds

By David Rising, Randy Herschaft and Richard Lardner Associated Press Posted: 10/19/2014

12:01:00 AM CDT | Updated: a day ago

Posted: 10/19/2014 12:01:00 AM CDT | Updated: a day ago

twincities.com



In this July 28, 2014, photo, Jakob Denzinger looks from his apartment window in Osijek, eastern Croatia. Denzinger is among dozens of death camp guards

OSIJEK, Croatia -- Dozens of suspected Nazi war criminals and SS guards collected millions of dollars in U.S. Social Security benefits after being forced out of the United States, an Associated Press investigation has found.

The payments, underwritten by American taxpayers, flowed through a legal loophole that gave the U.S. Justice Department leverage to persuade Nazi suspects to leave the U.S. If they agreed to go, or simply fled before deportation, they could

keep their Social Security, according to interviews and internal U.S. government records.

Among those receiving benefits were armed SS troops who guarded the network of Nazi camps where millions of Jews perished; a rocket scientist who used slave laborers to advance his research in the Third Reich; and a Nazi collaborator who engineered the arrest and execution of thousands of Jews in Poland.

There are at least four living beneficiaries. They include Martin Hartmann, a former SS guard at the Sachsenhausen camp in Germany; and Jakob Denzinger, who patrolled the grounds at the Auschwitz camp complex in Poland.

Hartmann moved to Berlin in 2007 from Arizona just before being stripped of his U.S. citizenship. Denzinger fled to Germany from Ohio in 1989 after learning denaturalization proceedings against him were underway. He soon resettled in Croatia and now lives in a spacious apartment on the right bank of the Drava River in Osijek. Denzinger would not discuss his situation when questioned by an AP reporter; Denzinger's son, who lives in the U.S., confirmed that his father receives Social Security payments and said he deserved them.

The deals allowed the Justice Department's former Nazi-hunting unit, the Office of Special Investigations, to skirt lengthy deportation hearings and increased the number of Nazis it expelled from the U.S.

But internal U.S. government records reveal heated objections from the State Department to OSI's practices. Social Security benefits became tools, U.S. diplomatic officials said, to secure agreements in which Nazi suspects would accept the loss of citizenship and

voluntarily leave the United States.

"It's absolutely outrageous that Nazi war criminals are continuing to receive Social Security benefits when they have been outlawed from our country for many, many, many years," said U.S. Rep. Carolyn Maloney of New York, a senior Democratic member of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. She said she plans to introduce legislation to close the loophole.

Since 1979, the analysis found, at least 38 of 66 suspects removed from the country kept their Social Security benefits.

The Social Security Administration expressed outrage in 1997 over the use of benefits, the documents show, and blowback in foreign capitals reverberated at the highest levels of government.

Austrian authorities were furious upon learning after the fact about a deal made with Martin Bartesch, a former SS guard at the Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria. In 1987, Bartesch landed, unannounced, at the airport in Vienna. Two days later, under the terms of the deal, his U.S. citizenship was revoked.

The Romanian-born Bartesch, who had immigrated to the U.S. in 1955, was suddenly stateless and Austria's problem. Bartesch continued to receive Social Security benefits until he died in 1989.

"It was not upfront, it was not transparent, it was not a legitimate process," said James Hergen, an assistant legal adviser at the State Department from 1982 to 2007. "This was not the way America should behave. We should not be dumping our refuse, for lack of a better word, on friendly states."

Neal Sher, a former OSI director, said the State Department cared more about diplomatic niceties than holding former members of Adolf Hitler's war machine accountable.

Amid the objections, the practice known as "Nazi dumping" stopped. But the benefits loophole wasn't closed.

Justice Department spokesman Peter Carr said in an emailed statement that Social Security payments never were employed to persuade Nazi suspects to depart voluntarily.

The Social Security Administration refused a request for the total number of Nazi suspects who received benefits and the dollar amounts of those payments. Spokesman William "BJ" Jarrett said the agency does not track data specific to Nazi cases.

A further barrier, Jarrett said, is that there is no exception in U.S. privacy law that "allows us to disclose information because the individual is a Nazi war criminal or an accused Nazi war criminal."

The department also declined to make the acting commissioner, Carolyn Colvin, or another senior agency official available for an interview.

Rabbi Marvin Hier, the founder and head of the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles, said the loophole should be closed.

"Someone receiving an American pension could live very well in Europe or wherever they settled," Hier said. "We, in effect, were rewarding them. It didn't make any sense."

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November 1, 2014



Exposed: student conman who fooled king

Who is Francisco Nicolás Gómez Iglesias?

Now millions of people in Spain have heard of the fresh-faced man just out of his teens who in just a few years and without any official position in public life managed to hobnob with leading politicians and business figures, even attempting to negotiate in legal matters

on behalf of Spain's former King Juan Carlos.

Many of those he met on the way were initially sceptical about this wunderkind with excellent contacts in the governing Popular Party (PP) but his charm and impressive lists of contacts, backed by the evidence of selfies taken with the great and the good which he kept on his mobile phone, usually smoothed away any doubts.

There is a photograph which sums up Gómez's vertiginous arrival at Spain's top table. Hair slicked back and in a dark suit, the young Francisco is shown bowing his head as he shakes the hand of Spain's new king, Felipe VI, one of just 2,000 people in attendance at the proclamation party last June.

The king has a slightly bemused expression on his face, as well he might. The Royal Household has told the daily El Mundo that the young man attended the event as "the companion of another guest," before adding that no more comments could be made due to the ongoing judicial investigation into Gómez's activities.

Besides attending undergraduate lectures at Madrid's CUNEF financial and legal school, Gómez had an extraordinarily busy and tangled life. He started out as a schoolboy, getting his mother to present him to the FAES think-tank, connected to the PP.

Shortly after, he began to appear at conferences and organised a large meeting of young PP supporters before going to party headquarters and suggesting that a junior congress be set up on a national level with himself at its head. He was only 15 at the time. His request was refused.

But, claiming to be the protégé of the secretary of state for trade in Mariano Rajoy's PP government, Gómez began to find that other doors would open for him. He was seen in

photographs with former Prime Minister José María Aznar, the Madrid PP leader Esperanza Aguirre and the former IMF managing director, Rodrigo Rato, now accused of fraud owing to his involvement in the secret credit card scandal at Caja Madrid savings bank.

The mobile phone was one of his key weapons. According to sources consulted by El Mundo, Gómez would always seize the opportunity to get his hands on the phone of whoever he was meeting, on the pretence of uploading a programme or solving a problem, and busily memorise useful numbers.

Thus he was able to boast to his friends that he had called Spain's former king: "Your Majesty, Juan Carlos, I can solve the problems of Princess Cristina," Gómez reportedly told the monarch, explaining that he was "negotiating" with one of the private prosecutors in the fraud case involving the 'infanta' and her husband, Iñaki Urdangarin. King Juan Carlos's exact answer is not known.

Claiming to be representing Spain's deputy prime minister, Soraya Sáenz de Santamaría, Gómez met with Miguel Bernad, who is part of the prosecution against Princess Cristina, and asked him to withdraw his accusations. He even promised Bernad's companion at the lunch, a Catalan businessman, a nine-million-euro loan from BNP Paribas bank "on fabulous terms".

Gómez with former Spanish Prime Minister José María Aznar.

Finally, Gómez's pigeons came home to roost. Cruising around night-time Madrid complete with a bodyguard and a fleet of Audi A-8 cars, he promised businessmen favours, arranging paperwork issues for club owners and the like through his contacts. He also claimed to have access to Spain's CNI secret service and traded alleged information from this source. He charged up to 50,000 for each deal and moved into a mansion in Madrid's exclusive El Viso district.

One businessman who was not satisfied that he had been granted the favour required said that Gómez returned the 30,000 he had been paid when a gun was pointed at his head.

A Madrid judge has removed Gómez's passport but he has been released without bail while the investigation continues.

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Government Files Reveal the Truth About the Bunny Man

Oct. 31, 2014

On this Halloween, Fairfax County officials were finally forced to admit the truth about the Bunny Man. Urban legend claims this deranged killer dressed in a bunny suit strikes on Halloween, and his victims are hung from a railway bridge near Clifton.

County historian and researcher, Brian A. Conley, conducted **an investigation that officially debunks the myth**. This extensive report concludes that the Bunny Man doesn't exist—but government officials were recently forced to release **this photographic evidence, along with a never-before, publicly seen 1970's police report, that tell a different story.**

Last year around this time, county biologists set up a camera to monitor wildlife, and it captured this picture that was kept secret until now.



ASGD 197 AREA 30-0 CASE NO. 858-748
NO 4 DUTY STATION 1
PLAINTANT _____ PHONE NO. _____
RESS Security Gaurd---Kings Park West Sub-Division
E OF EVENT 10/29/70 TIME OF EVENT 2210 DATE RECEIVED 10/29/70
URE OF CASE Large Rabbit at Large---(Vandalism) CLASS _____ CODE _____
AILS I made contact with Officer J.S. Brown of this department in refer-
ence to this case at approx., 1437 hours on 10/31/70.
At this time Officer Brown stated that the complainant could be reached
through the business office at Kings Park West, or at the trailer office
at the construction sight of the new homes. He further stated that the compl
lives in Maryland somewhere, but that he (Brown) did not have any further
information regarding the complainant.
It was further learned that the house at which the alleged "Large White
Rabbit", was chopping on the porch post, was located at the intersection of
Guinea Rd., and Pomeroy Dr., and that there were several hawk marks on the
post.
After recieving this information I responded to the Kings Park West sub
division in an attempt to locate the Large White Rabbit.
On 10/31/70 at approx., 1655 hours after returning to the office, I
recieved a phone call from a subject by the name of _____ of
Falls Church.,
Mr _____ related the following story; At approx., 1645 hours, he had rece
a telephone call from a subj., who stated; " Is this _____,
"You don't know me ,I'm known as the Axe man". Subject went on to say,
Mr _____ you have been mesing up my property, by dumping tree stumps, lim
and brush, and other things on the property. The unkown subj., then stated

11/08/70

Law. W. J. Johnson

COUNTY OF FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA
POLICE DEPARTMENT
INVESTIGATION REPORT

UNIT ASSG 307 AREA 30.0

CASE NO. 858 718

DIVISION 5 DUTY STATION 4

DATE 10-29-70

COMPLAINANT

PHONE NO.

HOME ADDRESS Security - Kings Park West

DATE RECEIVED 10-29-70 TIME RECEIVED HR. 12 MIN 31 WEATHER Cloud LIGHT DARK

DATE OF EVENT PRES TIME OF EVENT HR. 12:30 DAY OF WEEK 5 FEL - MISC misc

PLACE OF EVENT 5307 Guinea Rd. CLASS 51 CODE 801

NATURE OF CASE LARGE Rabbit AT Large 47002

SUBJECT NO. 1 W/M 20 5'8" NED

ADDRESS

SUBJECT NO. 2

ADDRESS

DETAILS OF INVESTIGATION

This unit along with units 195, 303, 422, 266 and 248
Responded to the above location for a subject dressed
as a Rabbit with an AK. This subject, the Rabbit had
taken his AK to a porch post at GUINER Rd.
and then ran from the complainant.

All these units checked the area and found no
Rabbit.

No further action taken.

Case closed

T.O.T.C.I.B.

Det. L. Wilson

TIME NOTIFIED 2251 TIME ARRIVED 2242 TIME CLEARED 2302 DATE 10-29-70

FOLLOW UP OR FURTHER

INVESTIGATION REQUIRED BY

APPROVED # 1A-20-70

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATING OFFICER

COUNTY OF FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA
POLICE DEPARTMENT
SUPPLEMENTARY INVESTIGATION REPORT

W. JOHNSON

UNIT ASSG. 197 AREA 30-0

CASE NO. 858-748

DIVISION 4 DUTY STATION 1

COMPLAINANT _____ PHONE NO. _____

ADDRESS Security Guard--Kings Park West

DATE OF EVENT 10/29/70 TIME OF EVENT 2210 DATE RECEIVED 10/29/70

NATURE OF CASE Large White Rabbit At Large-- (Vandalism) CLASS _____ CODE _____

DETAILS see the Bunny Man ,he (Bunny Man), does not always have his Bunny suit
on.

Mrs then stated that the neighborhood children who have seen
or been with the "Bunny Man", describe him as an older teenager, meaning
thathe is between the ages of eight-en and twenty years of age.

On 11/4/70 at approx., 1647 hours I made contact with Mrs
and set a time to interview her
son . /8 yrs.

At approx., 1600 hours I interviewedthe subject and at this
time he advised that he hadnever seen the"Bunny Man", and had never been
with him. He further related that he had only heardof the BUunny Man at
school, from the rest of thechildren talking about him.

further stated that one of his friends, named
had seen the "Bunny Man" on previous occassions.

On 11/5/70 I responded to the Laurel Ridge Schooland talked to
with the principal of the school. I explainedto him why I was there and
requested he furnish me with the name and address of the parents of
which he did.

I then responded to the home of Mr and Mrs
in theKings Park West Sub Division.

No one was at home at this time.

W. JOHNSON

CASE NO. B58-748

PHONE NO. _____

COMPLAINANT _____ PHONE NO. _____

DATE OF EVENT 10/29/70 TIME OF EVENT 2210 DATE RECEIVED 10/29/70

DETAILS: Mr. _____ may be the person posing as the White Rabbit as the description
_____ that Mr. _____ provided is similar to the description of the subject, in this
_____ case. Also the subj., referred to himself as the "Axe Man", which also
_____ leads one to believe that the White Rabbit and the Axe man may be the same
_____ person.

Several attempts again were made to contact Mr. [redacted] in the meantime.

Officer Bender stated that a Mrs. _____ had contacted him and stated that her son, _____ and a subject named _____ were alleged to know where the "Bunny Man" stayed and possibly who he was.

Bazyk stated that he had recieved a call from the Metropolitan Police
Department to the effect that a Mr. _____ a parking lot attendant at the P.M.I.
Parking lot at 9th and D st., N.W., HAD OBSERVED A 1976 Ford L.T.D. Blue in

CASE OR SUMMONS NO. 11/8/70 Inv. W.L. Johnson

COUNTY OF FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA
POLICE DEPARTMENT
SUPPLEMENTARY INVESTIGATION REPORT

W. JOHNSON

UNIT ASGD 197 AREA 30-D

CASE NO. 858-748

DIVISION 4 DUTY STATION 1

COMPLAINANT

PHONE NO.

ADDRESS Security--Kings Park West Sub-Division

DATE OF EVENT 10/29/70 TIME OF EVENT 2210 DATE RECEIVED 10/29/70

NATURE OF CASE Large White Rabbit At Large---(Vandalism) CLASS CODE

DETAILS to Mr. " You can make everything right , by meeting me tonight

and talking about the situation. The unknown subj., then advised Mr
to walk along Guinea Rd., between Zion Dr., and the railroad tracks between
2330 and 2400 hours 10/31/70. The subject then stated " You won't know me,
but I'll know you. The subject then hung up the phone.

Mr. stated that the subject who had called him sounded as though
he may be a W/M/ in his late teens or early twenties, Subjects voice sort
of quivered, as though he were scared. Mr. related that he thinks he
has heard the voice before, but could not remember where or when he heard the
voice, or whose it was. Mr. further related that he intended to meet
the subj., if he could find some transportation to the scene.

At 1910 hours Mr. was contacted and advised that a stake out was
going to be placed on the scene, and in the area mentioned by the unknown subj.
Mr. stated that he would notify me by 2230 hours as to whether or
not he would definitely be there.

At approx., 2300 hours , myself and Sgt., Hurst, Inv., Anderson and
Inv., Shifko , went to the area of Zion Dr., and Guinea Rd., and set up
surveillance in the area.

Prior to going to the area ,Mr. was advised to plan his arrival
in the area for approx., 2330 hours.

The stake out was set up with the thinking that the subj., who had called

CASE OR SUMMONS NO. 11/8/70 DATE Inv., W.L. Johnson

COUNTY OF FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA
POLICE DEPARTMENT
SUPPLEMENTARY INVESTIGATION REPORT

W. JOHNSON

UNIT ASGD 197 AREA 30-0

CASE NO. 858-748

DIVISION 4 DUTY STATION 1

COMPLAINANT

PHONE NO.

ADDRESS Security Guard ---Kings Park West

DATE OF EVENT 10/29/70 TIME OF EVENT 2210 DATE RECEIVED 10/29/70

NATURE OF CASE Large White Rabbit At Large--(Vandalism) CLASS CODE

DETAILS After a very extensive investigation into this and all other cases of this same nature, it is still unsubstantiated as to whether or not there really is a white rabbit.

The only people who have seen this so called white rabbit have been children of rather young ages, and the complainant in this case

Upon interviewing every one in this case that may have had any knowledge of any incidents concerning a white rabbit, that has been no significant information uncovered that would lead to the identity of the person or persons that were posing as a white rabbit.

This case will be marked as inactive.

INACTIVE.

CASE OR SUMMONS NO.

3/14/71

Inv. W. I. Johnson

W. JOHNSON

CASE NO. RSR-7A8

PHONE NO. _____

COMPLAINANT _____

PHONE NO. _____

CLASS _____ CODE _____

CLASS _____ CODE _____

CLASS _____ CODE _____

CLASS _____ CODE _____

CLASS _____ CODE _____

CLASS _____ CODE _____

CLASS _____ CODE _____

Inv., W.L. Johnson

Family of man accused of damaging Ten Commandments monument talks

24min

koco.com

- OKLAHOMA CITY —The Secret Service has arrested an individual for allegedly driving into the Ten Commandments monument near the state Capitol building.

o



Officials say someone drove their car into monument Thursday night, smashing it to pieces. The suspect reportedly made vague threats at the Oklahoma City Federal Building today and was taken into custody. His name has not yet been released.

The suspect has been identified as Michael Tate Reed Jr., 29. He is from Roland and was taken to

Oklahoma County mental facility for an emergency order of detention and a mental evaluation.

The suspect said Satan told him to do it, Secret Service officials said. He also reportedly said he would kill President Obama and spit on a photo of Obama. The suspect also allegedly admitted that he urinated on the Ten Commandments monument before running it over.

Reed's mother, Crystal Tucker, said such an action is not something he would do.

"He would never deface something that meant so much to him. He takes the Ten Commandments very seriously," Tucker said.

Tucker said Reed has been battling breakdowns for two years.

"It all started after an injury at work four years ago," Tucker said. "Now, when he has these breakdowns, the one thing that is foremost in his mind, his religion, is the thing he takes it out on."

Tucker said Reed does not worship Satan.

"Anyone who knows Michael, knows he loves his God," Tucker said. "Right now, everyone is praying for him."

The cleanup is underway and parts of the monument will be restored.

The Oklahoma Highway Patrol is investigating the malicious destruction of state property and will be looking for surveillance footage.

"We'll process the scene and suspect vehicle to further the investigation in hopes of locating the responsible party", said spokesperson George Brown.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Oklahoma made this statement following the incident:

"The ACLU of Oklahoma and our clients are outraged at this apparent act of vandalism. While we have and continue to seek the removal of the Ten Commandments monument from the Capitol grounds through the judicial process, the Ten Commandments constitute a strong foundation in our clients' deeply held religious beliefs. To see the Ten Commandments desecrated by vandals is highly offensive to them as people of faith. Our Oklahoma and Federal Constitutions seek to create a society in which people of all faiths and those of no faith at all can coexist as equals without fear of repressions from the government or their neighbors. Whether it is politicians using religion as a political tool or vandals desecrating religious symbols, neither are living up to the full promise of our founding documents."

An official with the US Attorney's Office said if enough evidence is found against the suspect regarding his alleged threats against the president then a report will be submitted to the US Attorney's Office.

Anyone with information about the incident is asked to call OHP at 405-425-7709.

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*Belle Gunness -
Family photo*

Serial Killer Belle Gunness:

Belle Gunness (1896-1908) was responsible for killing 49 people on her small farm in La Porte, Indiana, just outside of Chicago. Her victims included ranch workers, vagrant females, adopted children and her many husbands.

An Accident In the Kitchen:

Peter Gunness, Belle's first husband, was supposedly struck and killed by a meat grinder which fell off a kitchen shelf. The 280-pound Belle did not mourn the loss for long and quickly took up with various men she met through personal ads. The men never seemed to stay around long, each mysteriously vanishing without a trace.

Ray Lamphere:

One exception was ranchhand Ray Lamphere who became Belle's lover and helped her fake her own death after relatives of some of the missing men began questioning their disappearance.

Bodies Unearthed:

Belle's small brick farmhouse was set on fire and in ashes authorities found the body of a woman they believed to be Belle. The fact that the woman seemed to weigh no more than 150 pounds and was headless seemed of no consequence. Various teeth, bones and parts of bodies were also found in the ashes, along with men's watches and other personal belongings of various men who had entered Belle's door.

Love Till the End:

Lamphere was arrested for arson and for the murder of Belle Gunness, but as more bodies were unearthed around the farmhouse, each cut up and wrapped in oil cloth, the murder case against Lamphere fell apart and he was found guilty of arson only. He later died in prison, but confessed to his prison cellmate beforehand, admitting to his love for Belle and his involvement in faking her death.

Take the Money and Run:

Authorities later determined that Belle's victims died mostly of poison and collectively contributed \$30,000 to Belle's pocketbook. Belle was never caught for the murders and what happened to her was never known. On the record, her death is listed as April 1908, the last time she was seen alive.

Source:

Murder Most Rare The Female Serial Killer by Michael D. Kelleher and C.L. Kelleher
The A To Z Encyclopedia of Serial Killers by Harold Schechter and David Everitt

The mysterious tracks spotted on Clearwater Beach in the late '40s caused quite a stir. Were they left by a monster? A giant penguin? The answer eluded everyone. Well, almost everyone.

Sixty years ago this summer, something scary happened on the beach. A monster emerged from the Gulf of Mexico and wandered around in the dark.

The Clearwater Monster didn't hurt anyone, but left tracks, lots of them, discovered the next morning on the sand.

The tracks looked like nothing anyone had ever seen. They weren't the kind of tracks left by dinosaurs, but they were large, about 14 inches long and 11 inches wide. They featured a narrow heel and 3 long toes. The tracks were more birdlike than reptilian, though not entirely birdlike. They were a dispatch from an unknown world.

The news made the papers. The news made the radio. The monster was the talk of Clearwater. A few citizens stepped forward to announce they had seen something mysterious on the beach that night, something alien, and if you didn't believe them, why, you could jump in a lake.

Clearwater was a modest town of 15,000. The war was over. Yankees who had discovered Florida during military training moved into little bungalows and started having kids. Only the very rich had air conditioning. But anybody could chill for a few hours at the picture show while enjoying The Big Sleep starring Bogey and Bacall.

Citrus was bigger than tourism. Pinellas County was the grapefruit capital of the world. The beaches were wilder than they are today. Mom-and-pop motels were scattered here and there along the coast, but it was hard to find parking meters. There were a few bridges, though many rowed their boats across Clearwater Harbor to the barrier island.

Light pollution had not been invented. In the summer, teenage couples could neck on the beach and almost touch the Milky Way. Loggerhead turtles crawled up in the dark to lay eggs near the sand dunes.

Clearwater was a sleepy place, something right off a postcard — the perfect stomping ground for the monster.

The Clearwater Monster was clever. The fiend left tracks, inflamed imaginations, then vanished. Just when people stopped thinking about him, he crept out of the surf again.

This time he knocked over a lifeguard stand and left hair or feathers or something unearthly on wooden pilings.

He went on a rampage. The Clearwater Monster walked the beach at Indian Rocks. He visited the waterfront of Sarasota. He rounded the Pinellas peninsula, headed north, bypassed the St. Petersburg waterfront and kept going until he found a place to leave tracks on the sand next to the Courtney Campbell Causeway.

He got the rampaging out of his system. He laid low for the next year.

In 1948, the creature showed up about 100 miles north of Pinellas County. A beachcomber found tracks near the mouth of the Suwannee River.

"He's loose again!!" wrote St. Petersburg Times columnist Dick Bothwell, never afraid to employ an exclamation point or a few exclamation points in a good story.

Scientists were interrogated about the monster.

One said, "It couldn't be real." Another thought the tracks might have been left by a giant salamander.

"Plaster casts were made of some of the tracks," Bothwell wrote, "and it was estimated by some that the beast — if beast it was — might have weighed some 2,000 pounds."

It was left to Ivan Sanderson, a self-taught zoologist, author and WNBC radio commentator, to render an intelligent opinion. As the flash bulbs popped he studied the tracks, furrowed his brow, did some measuring. He was photogenic, a Douglas Fairbanks for the beach set, with slicked-back hair, a pencil-thin mustache and wardrobe that all but announced "Adventure!" Only an ascot could have improved his look.

Florida had a real monster on its hands!

"Definitely not a hoax," Sanderson announced. The tracks were so deep and wide, he opined, that only something heavy and tall could have made them.

"A giant penguin," was his theory.

On a recent afternoon in Clearwater, Tony Signorini answered the door of his house on S Prescott Avenue. A rosary rattled in the pocket of his slacks.

"Come in," he said. "Make yourself comfortable."

He led the way to the kitchen table.

"What can I tell you?"

Something about yourself.

"I'm 85 years old. I was born in Pennsylvania, not far from Pittsburgh. I was in the Air Force. I worked on B-17s, B-24s and B-29s during the war. Then Elsie and I came to Clearwater to

visit her folks. I remember it was December. It was snowing back in Pennsylvania! I said to Elsie, 'Do you want to go back?' She didn't, and I didn't either."

They stayed in Clearwater.

"I went to work at a place called Auto Electric. It was on Greenwood and Pierce. The guy who owned it was Al Williams. A lot of people thought Al Williams was kind of crabby. He actually had a good sense of humor. He was a real practical joker. I was never a practical joker. People thought I was real serious, but I had my fun side when I was around Al. One time, he put a horse in a jail cell in Clearwater!"

A horse?

"Yes, somebody let him in to do it as a joke on the police chief. That's the way it was back then. Everybody had fun with everybody. Another time we hung a weather balloon from the fire station. We put this electronic device in the balloon to make it explode on command. It sounded like a bomb going off! Lucky the war was over!"

The fire chief must have been a basket case.

"He knew it was Al. The fire chief called me up one night, said, 'We want you to call Al at home and tell him his shop is on fire.' I didn't want to do it, but I did. Al drove over there right away pretty scared. He said, 'You're in on this?' I said, 'I'm sorry, Al. They held a gun to my head.' "

Al must have had a little devil in him.

"He always had something going. One time, downtown, at the band shell, there was some kind of event happening. Cars were a lot different back then from today. You could take a hood right off a car! We went through the parking lot taking hoods off of cars! Then we put a yellow hood on a blue car and a blue hood on a red car and so on. It was lots of fun."

Sounds like it.

"Back in, I want to say 1946, though it could have been '47, Al gets his hands on a National Geographic. There was a picture of dinosaur tracks. Al said, 'You know, we could have fun with this.'"

You made a dinosaur track?

"It wasn't exactly a dinosaur track."

Do you still have it?

"Sure, it's in the garage."

Tony's son, who had been sitting by his dad, disappeared into the garage. He returned carrying something heavy.

"We made them in the shop," Tony said, looking at the weird boots his son lay on the table. "They were plaster at first, but you couldn't make a good track with plaster. It just didn't sink in the sand deep enough to look authentic."

We went to this blacksmith shop and poured lead in our molds. Each track weighed 30 pounds. We bolted black high-top gym shoes to each track."

Then what?

"Al and I rowed out to the beach. I put on the shoes. I jumped out of the boat in shallow water. I was young then, about 25 or so, and much stronger than I am now, an old man. I had to kind of swing my legs out to the side and then forward to get going. Somehow I didn't break my legs. I left deep tracks about 6 feet apart. I made this big loop from the surf, up the beach, and then back into the water to the boat."

So Tony Signorini is the famous Clearwater Monster?

"Yes. We were surprised to read in the papers that people had seen the monster because nobody was on the beach that night. We got a kick out of that."

Did anybody ever tell on you?

"Not that I know of. I'm sure the police chief knew it was us, but he never said anything. My wife, Elsie, knew, because I'd go out about 10 o'clock at night and come back around 2 o'clock in the morning all covered with sand."

She thought it was funny. And she knew there were worse things a man could be doing than making monster tracks."

What about the rest of your life?

"Well, Al died in 1969. I took over Auto Electric. Elsie and I had four kids, they grew up, they're all good kids. My Elsie died a few years ago on account of her lungs. I've had two heart surgeries, but I'm okay now, just a little slower. I stay busy. I volunteer at Morton Plant Hospital twice a week. I have volunteered 3,000 hours at the hospital over the years."

Do they know at the hospital that you're the Clearwater Monster?

"I don't think so. They probably never heard of him."

Do they know about the monster at your church, St. Cecelia's?

"I doubt it. They just know me as the guy who's an usher at the 9:30 Mass on Sunday morning and the guy who hands out Holy Communion at the 5:30 Mass on Saturday afternoon."

Would the Eucharistic minister from St. Cecelia's like to leave some monster tracks on

Clearwater Beach?

“Sure, I’ll go, though somebody will have to carry the monster shoes. They’re too heavy for me now that I’m an old man. We’ll go to Sand Key, but I have to tell you, it’s not like it used to be. There’s lots of people and buildings now.”

Jeff Klinkenberg can be reached at (727) 893-8727 or klink@sptimes.com.

[Last modified June 24, 2006, 21:43:05]

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This screengrab shows the Amaruk website. (amaruk.com screengrab)

It was billed by the CBC as an “exclusive” investigation: a sweet, young B.C. girl named Bethany Paquette had applied for a job as a guide with an adventure tourism company called Amaruk.

Bethany didn’t get the job. But what she did get was a tirade of anti-Christian vitriol from the company. A series of e-mails purportedly sent from the

company’s Canadian and Norwegian managers attacked Bethany because her resume indicated she had graduated from Trinity Western University, a B.C. school that promotes Christian values.

A series of fabulously named Amaruk managers – Olaf Amundsen, Christopher Fragassi-Bjornsen, and Arkyn Borg – took turns e-mailing Bethany, all in perfect English, about how much they hated her, Christians and Trinity Western.

She would not be welcome at Amaruk, they said, because TWU believes marriage is between a man and a woman. By contrast, “the Norse background of most of the guys at the management level means that we are not a Christian organization, and most of us actually see Christianity as having destroyed our culture, tradition, and way of life,” Amundsen wrote.

The e-mails soon degenerated into profanity. When Bethany wrote back, and ended with the phrase, “God Bless,” Amundsen went into a rage. “God Bless is very offensive to me, and yet another sign of your attempts to impose your religious views on me. I do not want to be blessed by some guy who was conceived by a whore, outside of marriage, and whom has been the very reason for the most horrendous abuses and human rights violations in the history of the human race. If I was to meet the guy, I’d actually f--- him.”

This was all on Amaruk letterhead. It was shocking and vicious. And under B.C. human rights law, it’s illegal – you can’t discriminate in hiring based on religion. Bethany retained a lawyer, Geoffrey Trotter, and they filed a legal complaint against Amaruk including the e-mails quoted above that she claims she received.

It was a spectacular story, and other news media followed up. I did a TV show on the subject, crediting the CBC for finally reporting on anti-Christian bigotry, and railing against Amaruk. The National Post newspaper made it their front-page story. The story was huge news across B.C.

Except Amaruk might not be real. They have a grandiose website, with beautiful images of

the great outdoors. But they're fake photos – ripped off from the Internet. The website boasts of being a massive, multi-national tourism company. But only vague descriptions of actual trips or tours are listed. The locations of the outdoor fantasy photos, or their “40,000-sheep ranch” are never identified.

The website is affiliated with other websites that have a homo-erotic feeling – idolizing the “Viking” lifestyle – bearded hipsters with great abs, out in the woods.

The CBC's investigative reporter, Natalie Clancy, got her initial story half-right. Bethany was the subject of an anti-Christian tirade. But she didn't lose a job over it – there was no job to be had. It appears to be an elaborate hoax.

We all make mistakes. Bethany was real, as were the hateful e-mails. And Amaruk's elaborate website seemed real enough, at first glance.

The CBC was just as much a victim of a hoax as was Bethany. But the CBC, which raised the same questions about Amaruk in a follow-up story, shouldn't abandon the story now. They should find out who has been impersonating a tourism company – and even filing fake reports on an Industry Canada website. Amaruk's Twitter feed has just one entry on it – but follows a host of B.C.-based environmental extremist groups and gay activists. It could be that Amaruk is a bizarre secret project of a public B.C. leftist activist. Will the CBC follow up?

It's too bad that the first time the CBC took a serious interest in anti-Christian bigotry, they were duped. I hope that doesn't turn them off the subject. There are plenty of real anti-Christian bigots in Canada, who attack Trinity Western all the time. Right now, law societies across Canada are debating banning TWU's graduates from practicing law. That's just as vicious as the fake trolls at Amaruk. But they're real, and unafraid to use their real names.

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Gambler, 60, Arrested On Felony Charge For Ebola Joke Inside Cleveland Casino

thesmokinggun.com

October 17, 2014

Gambler, 60, Arrested On Felony Charge For Ebola Joke Inside Cleveland Casino

An ill-advised Ebola joke has landed an Ohio man behind bars on a felony charge, records show.

Emanuel Smith, 60, was gambling Wednesday at the Horseshoe Casino in Cleveland when he allegedly told a dealer that he was there as a way to avoid his

ex-wife, who was stricken with Ebola.

Smith, a retired municipal employee, claimed that his former spouse had recently returned to Cleveland from West Africa.

According to a Municipal Court filing, Smith's comment "caused panic" in the downtown casino, a portion of which was shut down as a result of Smith's claim. The closure, investigators allege, caused the business to suffer "a large financial loss."

Several hours after his Ebola comment, Smith was arrested at his Cleveland home and



charged with inducing panic, a felony, and criminal trespass. He was booked into the Cuyahoga County jail, where he is being held in lieu of \$10,000 bond.

A judge has ordered Smith, seen at left, to stay away from the casino, which opened in 2012.

Smith made his Ebola crack on the day that it was first reported that a Texas nurse who tested positive for the disease had recently flown to Cleveland to visit family and try on wedding dresses.

A YOUNG woman is auctioning her imaginary friend on eBay on the advice of her psychiatrist.

In the ad, 22-year-old Londoner Georgia Horrocks explains that her invisible buddy, Bernard, manifested “at a time of emotional instability” during her childhood.



Georgia posted this photo of herself and Bernard on eBay. Imaginary friends have been known to fetch thousands of dollars online.

“My psychiatrist recommended that I say goodbye to Bernard, and although I would like some financial compensation it is more important that he finds a good home,” Ms Horrocks writes.

She hoped the “active” and “mischievous” Bernard would fetch as much as £200 (AUD 367), adding that he “will be sent via imagination to the winning bidder”.



The ad as it appeared shortly after Georgia posted it on eBay.

Before you dismiss Ms Horrocks’ ad — or this story — as a dumb joke that nobody in their right mind would fall for, know that in 2007, a British man sold his imaginary friend for a whopping \$2,750.

The vendor, “thewildandcrazyoli”, posted the following

sales pitch: “My imaginary friend Jon Malipiemann is getting too old for me now. I am now 27 and I feel I am growing out of him.

“He is very friendly. Along with him, I will send you what he likes and dislikes, his favourite things to do and his personal self portrait.”



It's that time of year...

Fact: Around half of the American population, in survey after survey, say they believe in ghosts and hauntings.

There have been dozens of television shows, books, videos and Internet sites in the past 20 years featuring people who claim to be paranormal investigators who found evidence of the paranormal.

Around Halloween time, the media is dripping with hype about ghost tours, ghost hunts, and local paranormal investigations of the community's historical places with breathless claims of *proof of ghosts* from these amateur ghost hunters.

What should we think about ghosts? *It's a complicated question.* Here are some facts and FAQs to help get you square about where we are with our knowledge of ghosts and paranormal evidence.

What is a ghost?

This is a deceptively tricky question! The answer you get will completely depend on whom you ask. The "ghost" is one of the most popular concepts of the paranormal (beyond normal). Yet, there is not one agreed-upon definition across disciplines of what a ghost is since one has never actually been caught and examined.



Fact: No ghost has ever been confirmed caught and/or examined by anyone or anything. Therefore, we can't determine its actual characteristics with any amount of certainty.

The common features we ascribe to ghosts is what we learn from popular culture where the concept of "ghost" has changed considerably through time.

The most common idea about a ghost is that it is the spirit of a dead person (or animal). This implies there is a "spirit". However, we can't define or measure "spirit," either, because it has not ever been captured or measured. It's more of a faith-based belief, like the soul.

Ghosts are interpreted as being what remains of a person that has not passed to the next realm of existence.

Fact: There is no scientific conclusion that any other realm exists for our "being" to pass to

after death.

For reasons that are not consistent through time, paranormalists conclude that some unlucky folks may remain incorporeally stuck here after bodily death. Alternately, some paranormalists say that ghosts could be a form of psychic projection of the human mind.

Early scientific researchers (in the 1800s) who studied the concept in a methodical way, avoided the term “ghost”. Instead they used terms like “phantasms of the dead” or “apparitions”.

Your neighborhood paranormal investigator is fond of describing a ghost as a manifestation of the “energy” of a former being. “Energy” in this case is also used incorrectly since there is no energy sustained after you die. When bodies decompose, that energy is released into the environment.

Fact: There is no evidence that “energy” remains or can be contained in a human-looking entity after the body is dead.

Within the corpus of paranormal literature, ghosts come in various types. The poltergeist is a noisy, troublesome, disruptive entity. Intelligent spirits may interact with people or be interpreted as having some earthly purpose to undertake. Residual hauntings are described like the process of a videotape replaying in the environment. Shadow people are said to be mobile black masses that emit an evil presence.

Ghosts that resemble people from many time periods have been reported but the most common reports are those of the recent past or from a well-known historical time - for example, soldiers dressed in uniform or women in Victorian clothing.

Today, we have set ideas of what a ghost should be and how it should behave. A “real” ghost is generally thought to be insubstantial and unthreatening; it may frighten a person, but it would not cause physical harm (although ghosts have become more threatening to add dramatic zing for television reality TV audiences and news media). When a ghost is seen, it is assumed that a person died at that spot some time before. Or, a spirit continues to reside in a place that was closely associated with that person in life.

Paranormal investigators often will not check actual historical records or will not be able to otherwise confirm real-life activities that they now attribute to the haunting such as murders, accidental deaths, or other tragedies. They often can’t confirm such people even existed but use the ghost stories to assert these were likely true.

Fact: Paranormal investigations are rarely supported by good historical evidence and scholarship. Techniques of investigation are amateurish and tend to support a prior belief instead of discovering verifiable and verified information.

"I saw a ghost." What does that mean?

There is also trouble with the physical definition of a ghost. Witnesses see lots of things that they may call "a ghost":

Other "ghost" experiences include:

There are very many alternative explanations for such experiences but it is difficult to convince the witness in most cases that it was just their brain creating the feeling.

Witnesses attribute a subjective experience to "a ghost". So the investigation of "ghosts" is fraught with problems that stem from the lack of definition of what a ghost really is. The idea of what a ghost is has changed over time and across regions and is not based on established conclusions from data (scientific) but on many cultural assumptions, including what is socially acceptable at the time. (Example: Orbs in photographs appeared with the advent of digital cameras but are interpreted by many as a ball of ghost energy.)

A "ghost" is a complex idea, a cultural "construct" - formed from a number of simpler elements and criteria.

Changes in social assumptions, particularly religious- and scientific- informed assumptions, affected the way people think of ghosts. Expectations change through time and so do the descriptions. This shows that ghosts are defined by the human mind as suitable for the occasion. [See RC Finucane, *Ghosts: appearances of the dead and cultural transformation* for a history]

What do people think is true about ghosts?

Our knowledge about ghosts comes from popular culture stories. Ghosts are not a scientific subject, they are a supernatural belief. Without the need to abide by natural laws, ghosts have great freedom to do whatever they wish and be interpreted however the observer wants.

Many paranormalists pursue the concept of ghosts as proof of evidence of life after death. In the past, ghosts were purposeful - they remained on earth to avenge their death or to reveal information. That is rarely reported now.

Other beliefs (not facts) about ghosts include the following:

- A violent or emotional death could trap the spirit of a dead person in the world of the living.
- Animals have a greater sensitivity to spirits and paranormal energy than humans.
- Graveyards may be paranormal hotspots because of the high emotion level and that they are liminal place between the worlds of the living and the dead.
- Historic buildings are often said to be haunted - mainly because of the cultural

connotation of old houses having spirits that remain. Abandoned hospitals, asylums and prisons are said to be haunted due to the great emotional residue, pain, violence, and death that took place.

- Some ghosts may be sent "into the light" and made to leave.

Ghost investigators will say ghosts are composed of energy that remains post-death. That energy influences or is associated in some way with electromagnetic fields. Paranormalists believe that ghosts feed off heat energy, batteries, electricity, electromagnetic fields or "earth energies".

Fact: The term "earth energies" is nonsensical. There are not "currents" that flow through the earth that can induce paranormal activity. Environmental variables that are routinely measured (temperature, magnetic fields, static electricity, humidity, etc.) in connection with what could be construed as a "ghost" may cause natural features that may be misinterpreted as "ghosts".

Fact: The idea some paranormalists have that ghosts are more likely to appear in paranormal "hot spots" related to limestone, quartz-rich rocks, rust, [stone tape "theory"] or flowing water [water tape "theory"] has no basis in physics, chemistry or geology. This is a manufactured concept stemming from fanciful ideas that the environment can record emotional events and then play them back. Unless you physically carve words or pictures into the medium, emotion is not recorded, let alone "played back" via mysterious, unknown means.

There are thousands of particularly haunted places hyped for notoriety or tourism. Even though such places are given the label "most haunted," scientists have not found anything anomalous in these places to speak of except an enhanced reputation that primes visitors to interpret every strange feeling or event as "paranormal". Famous haunted places include Borley Rectory (U.K., now demolished), the Tower of London (U.K.), Waverly Hills Sanatorium (Kentucky, U.S.), Gettysburg battlefield (Pennsylvania, U.S.) and the Winchester Mystery House (California, U.S.).

People have reported ghosts manifest their presence and behave in a wide variety of ways. Some of these ways are inconsistent (such as passing through solid objects but also moving solid objects). Ghosts are said to appear visually (as an apparition), create environmental anomalies (temperature changes, mists, air movements, sounds), move objects, make people feel ill, physically touch or apply force to living beings, manifest sounds (voices, crying, growling, moaning) or smells, create sound beyond normal human hearing (recorded electronic voice phenomena), manipulate magnetic or digital recording devices or powered objects, write words, manipulate devices to communicate words (ghost/spirit box, word generating devices), affect dowsing rods, communicate directly through those who have special psychic talent (mediums, sensitives), disregard physical encumbrances (walk through walls), use technology devices (send text messages and make phone calls). Almost any strange or not obviously explainable experience may be attributed to a ghost.

Fact: Ideas about what ghosts look like have changed through time, influenced by popular fictional stories (*Sleepy Hollow*, *A Christmas Carol*) and by theater devices like the phantasmagoria, Pepper's ghost, or special effects in movies and on television.

Why are ghosts traditionally depicted in a white sheet?

Depicting ghosts in a white sheet may have come from the burial cloth placed around a dead body showing only the face. This stereotype image was exploited by hoaxers and Hollywood and used in iconic representations, making it widely known.



Picture

Artist rendition of the Hammersmith Ghost (U.K.)

What is the evidence for ghosts?

The primary evidence for ghosts are anecdotes - stories that people tell of things that happened to them or that they have heard from others. Ghost stories have been common for millennia, appearing in countless forms, from the Bible, to *Macbeth*, to the daily news. Anecdotal evidence is the least reliable form of evidence. In fact, most anecdotes are misleading, incorrect, or outright fiction. Anecdotes are rarely confirmed by the listener because they occur in casual conversation where it is polite to accept the witness as being truthful. However, people make an incredible number of mistakes in perception and memory. Our brain fills in much of the information based on previous experiences or guesses. Our memory is not like videotape and our senses easily deceive us. Humans are terrible "tools" of measurement. That's why scientific processes are far more reliable and used instead of anecdotes as sound evidence.

Other evidence for ghosts include photos and videos which can often not be authenticated or can easily be mistaken interpretations, camera flaws, or deliberate hoaxes. The paranormal world is flooded with fake photos and videos. Remember, what you see on TV and the Internet is all edited to make it look better. It's entertainment, not evidence.

Other prime evidence from paranormal investigators is EVP recordings (electronic voice phenomena). EVP collection in the real world is uncontrolled with several possible explanations for anomalous sounds including misinterpreted sounds (body noises or clothing rustling), stray radio frequencies, people whispering, or magnetic or digital interference of the recording captured by the device (hard drive spinning). EVP is not evidence for anything paranormal, especially voices from the dead.

Can ghosts be measured or detected?

This question takes us back to the definition problem. We've not confirmed what a ghost is so we do not know if it has characteristics that can be measured. Yet, paranormal investigators

assume that anomalies in the environment, on film or recording, or even *feelings* are attributable to ghosts. That is not close to being confirmed when numerous non-paranormal explanations abound.

Today's paranormalists also suggest that we simply don't have the right technology yet to definitively find or detect the spirit world. But this is not a sound argument: Either ghosts exist with physical properties and appear in our ordinary world (and can therefore be detected and recorded in photographs, film, video, and audio recordings), or they don't. If ghosts exist and can be scientifically detected or recorded, then we should have hard evidence of that — we don't. If ghosts exist and for whatever reason cannot be scientifically detected or recorded, then all the photos, videos, and other recordings claimed to be evidence of ghosts cannot be ghosts.

The following characteristics have been suggested to be attributable to ghosts:

- Unexplained sounds
- Anomalies on Geiger counters, electromagnetic Field (EMF) detectors, ion detectors, infrared cameras and sensitive microphones.

Fact: No equipment has ever been shown to actually detect ghosts. Not even "ghost detectors".

Fact: Ghosts used to be described as full apparitions, not mists or orbs streaks of light. Modern ghost pictures are obscure; a full body apparition has never been verified on film though many hoaxes of them have been publicized by the media. Hoaxing must always be considered for ghost "evidence" because it is tremendously prevalent.

Why do people believe in ghosts?

The evidence for ghosts is so very weak, but people still believe in them. This belief is an ancient part of human cultures across the world. Why?

The idea of ghosts offers many people comfort; who doesn't want to believe that our beloved but deceased family members aren't looking out for us, or with us in our times of need? Ghosts served an important literary purpose and were useful in storytelling. Some of these storers were believed to be accurate even though they were made up. Most people believe in ghosts because of personal experience, they have seen or sensed some unexplained presence. Our culture allows us the option of interpreting these strange events as "ghosts".

Belief in the paranormal has become rather normal. People believe because they are invested emotionally, spiritually or economically. They are only interested in evidence that confirms such a belief and they ignore the reasoning that weighs strongly against the reality of ghosts.

What are the explanations for ghostly experiences?

Believing in ghosts is not ridiculous. It's a common human idea. When our senses and our brains mess with our perceptions, we may be justified in believing in paranormal experiences. Most people do not comprehend that our senses can and will fool us all the time. We see, hear, smell and feel things that are not really there, thanks to our brains.

When we are bombarded with media messages about ghosts, presented as if factual, it is easy to buy into the belief especially when it is culturally acceptable to do so.

There are many situations where people may perceive they have experienced a ghost. Natural conditions that may in some cases cause people to feel uneasy include exposure to infrasound, darkness, silence, closed in spaces, or high electromagnetic fields. But the most important factor seems to be prior belief in ghosts and expectation that they are present. This is why haunted places enhance their reputation as much as they can. The more they tell you others experienced paranormal phenomena there, the more likely that you will attribute every anomaly to the paranormal and not seek out the actual explanation.

Should you call paranormal investigators if you suspect a haunting?

This is not recommended since the vast majority of paranormal investigators believe that ghosts are the cause for many anomalies and will not have the training or inclination to seek out the best answer. They also are invested in declaring a finding of paranormal evidence. Their methods are amateurish, learned from TV ghost hunters or other non-science-trained colleagues. Confirmation that a house is haunted may be stressful to the family and may cause psychological issues. The verdict of "ghosts" may mask other home problems such as faulty wiring, poor insulation, a plumbing or heating problem, pest infestation, a troublesome neighbor, family stress, psychological problems of a household member, or even child abuse.

If you seriously feel that something is wrong with the house, contact a certified home inspector or a skeptic group who will investigate the situation -- not a paranormal group who claims to be "skeptical" (this term is misused and overused), but a skeptic group who do not subscribe to the paranormal.

Paranormal investigators after all these decades, centuries even, have not advanced any useful information that scientists can use to understand "what is a ghost" (with the possible exception of support for them being culturally derived).

Ghost stumpers

Why do ghosts wear clothes? If ghosts are human souls, why do they appear clothed with inanimate objects like hats and canes. Why do ghost trains, cars and carriages exist who have no life energy?

How can a limbless, immaterial spirit move objects, slam doors or make footstep sounds?

How can an entity without organs and vocal chords produce speech or screams? How can voices we can't hear be recorded on a device?

Why don't paranormal groups collaborate and show that they can get the same evidence, independently and blinded, on multiple occasions?

Why are there no ghosts of ancient man? Why isn't the world overrun with ghosts, considering all the people who have died?

Humans can detect quantum particles with extremely sensitive instrumentation. Why can't we yet detect ghosts?

If a place is really, really haunted, why haven't scientists been able to set up shop there and finally capture genuine paranormal phenomena?

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Picture

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Erwin High School

By Sarah Harrison

In the 1970's, the new Clyde Erwin High school was built just outside Asheville. The remnants of what was called the Old County Home Graveyard was dug up to make room for

the new building. The remains from this Potter's Field were moved across the street and

planted below unmarked wooden crosses. It's said that the restless spirits of those buried

here still haunt the school, and many janitors who have worked the night shift refuse to

recount the things they've experienced while inside. Unmarked graves are said to still lie

beneath the Potter's Field, overlooking the school.

Battle Mansion

By Sarah Harrison

The Battle Mansion is located near The Grove Park Inn. It is said to be haunted by a servant girl named Alice, who fell or was pushed down the stairs, and the former owner

Dr. Samuel Battle. Dr. Battle has been seen wearing a top hat and formal attire. When the Battle Mansion was the location of 13 WLOS TV, Alice was frequently seen by employees. She is described as wearing a long, old fashioned dress. I spoke with two

employees of Grove Park Inn. The first was doing work inside the house. He swore that

some wires hanging from the ceiling were swinging back and forth on their own. His partner was walking down the stairs when he screamed and ran down the rest of the way. He claimed someone grabbed him. The second was a security guard making rounds by the Battle Mansion. He claims he saw a man in a top hat and formal attire.

He

later saw a picture of Dr. Samuel Battle and swears that is who he saw.

In 2006, the Battle Mansion was demolished. I wonder if the ghosts will take up residence in the new condos they are building on the site.

Brown Mountain Lights

By Sarah Harrison

Probably the most famous of all mystery-light phenomena in the United States occurs in this area. Although they occur all

year long, July through September is the best time to see them. These luminous balls have been described as rolling or

tumbling along the ridge, they appear to rise above the ridge, they bump together and pull apart. The lights have been

reported to have been seen for hundreds of years. There is a Cherokee legend that claims they have been seen as far

back as the 1200's. Legend has it the lights are the spirits of the wives and mothers of Cherokee and Catawba warriors killed in battle, searching for their loved ones. Another story is that the lights are the spirit of a slave searching for his master who disappeared during a hunting trip. Places for viewing the lights are: Overlook at Mile Marker 20, off Hwy 181, near Morganton, Wiseman's View on the edge of Linville Gorge (turnoff on 181 just past Linville), Blue Ridge Parkway at Mile Marker 310. See Investigations page for a first hand account of seeing the Brown Mountain Lights.

Thomas Divide Overlook, Cherokee, NC

The Thomas Divide Overlook is located on the Blue Ridge Parkway, mile marker 464, near Cherokee, NC. There have been lights reported very similar to The Brown Mountain Lights. Some say more impressive.



Adjacent to Helen's Bridge, rather spooky looking.

Photo by Sarah Harrison

Helen's Bridge

Beaucatcher Mountain

By Sarah Harrison

Photo by Sarah Harrison

Helen's Bridge is located on

Beaucatcher Mountain in Asheville. The legend goes that a woman, inconsolable after the death of her daughter in a fire, hung herself from the bridge. There has been much paranormal activity associated with the bridge, apparitions, orbs, etc. Helen is supposed to wander the mountain in a long gown, asking those she meets if they have seen her daughter. One of the most unusual occurrences are the reports of car trouble at the bridge. I have spoken to people who have experienced car trouble at the bridge or soon afterwards, including Joshua Warren of Lemur. My own car's battery died the morning after I visited Helen's Bridge. Be warned, there is more present than the spirit of Helen. People have described seeing monstrous dark things coming out of the woods. They have described being slapped, hit, and scratched. If you do visit, be respectful, do not try to invoke or provoke anything up there.

The magnificent Grove Park Inn, located in North Asheville, is haunted by the famous Pink Lady. The legend goes that she was pushed or fell from a balcony to her death. She has been seen numerous times by

staff and guests. Room 545 seems to be the location of a great deal of paranormal activity, from loud noises to apparitions. I spoke with the husband of a housekeeper who reported seeing a lady dressed in pink walk into a restroom. The housekeeper waited for the lady to come out before going in to clean. When the lady didn't come out, she went in to investigate. There was no one there. She called her manager to report this and the manager told her that it was just the Pink Lady, like this was nothing out of the ordinary. Grove Park Inn's country club has been reported to have paranormal activity. From lights turning on and off by themselves to a spectral voice telling security guards to "get out".

Biltmore Estate

Barley's Taproom and the 1906 Massacre

By Sarah Harrison

Barley's Taproom on Biltmore Ave. in Asheville has been the site of paranormal activity, including footsteps, voices, apparitions, and an elevator that operated by itself. On November 13, 1906, Will Harris killed five people, including two police officers, and injured more before being gunned down himself. This happened in the area of what is now Barley's Taproom and Eagle St. The town gallows once stood close to where Barley's now stands.

Craven Street Bridge

By Sarah Harrison

At the Craven Street Bridge, over the French Broad River, the ghost of a naked little boy has been seen.

The story is that he drowned in the French Broad River near the bridge.

Shotzy's Bar

By Sarah Harrison

Shotzy's Bar, in the S&W Building in Downtown Asheville, has had reports of paranormal activity. Employees have seen a girl on the balcony and a waiter who walks the hall to the kitchen in back. Cooler doors open and shut by themselves. The bar has a long history, including being a Speakeasy during prohibition.

This isn't paranormal, but ghoulishly interesting. A group of people, with way too much time on their hands, dress up as zombies and hang out in Riverside Cemetery at night. They stumble around and act like the zombies from

Night of the Living Dead. So be warned, if you are planning a nighttime adventure in Riverside Cemetery, there are zombies afoot.

Church Street was created when unmarked graves were paved over. Paranormal activity and apparitions

have been reported there, including a woman dressed in old-fashioned clothes who appears to be searching for something. The First Presbyterian Church is haunted by a female spirit known as the Black Abbey. She is seen often during the Haunted Asheville Ghost Tours.

Inn on Main Street- Weaverville, NC

By Michael Tracey

100 year old home built by a doctor. The Innkeepers claim that pictures fall off the walls on New Year's Eve, as the back door opens and closes. There are blood stains in the bathroom's subfloor that will not sand out.

Katherine's Bed and Breakfast

By Sarah Harrison

Katherine's B&B, in Montford, is haunted by Grace, the former owner's great grandmother, she is a friendly spirit and is always followed by her faithful dog.

A face is seen in one of the top windows. The face is said to belong to a man who committed suicide when he lost everything in the Great Depression. The bullseye on the sidewalk in front of the building is supposed to be where the suicide landed. Why it was put there is a rather morbid mystery.

Biltmore Village Inn

Formally Reed House Bed & Breakfast

By Sarah Harrison

The house was built in 1892 by Samuel Harrison Reed. Samuel Reed's life was full of loss. Five of his nine children died young and then his wife passed away. Six months after his wife's death, Samuel Reed died. His remaining four children were sent to live with relatives. The house was abandoned for eight years in the '60's and '70's. The house was purchased in 1973 and turned into a Bed and Breakfast. The sound of heavy boots on the stairs is frequently heard. A spectral game of pool is another frequent occurrence. Bedroom doors open and close by themselves and lights turn on and off by themselves.

Battery Park Hotel, downtown Asheville

By Sarah Harrison

The Battery Park Hotel is now an apartment building. It is said to be haunted by the spirit of a woman who was brutally murdered. On the morning of July 17th, 1936, Helen Clevenger was discovered murdered in room 224. She had been savagely beaten, her face slashed, and she had been shot. An employee, Martin Moore, eventually confessed and died in the gas chamber. The Battery Park Hotel also has been the scene of a number of suicides committed by jumping from the roof. On

stormy nights Helen is seen wandering the halls of the old hotel. People have reported seeing bodies falling from the roof. A tragic suicide being replayed over and over?

The Spectral Dog of Pond Road

By Sarah Harrison

On Pond Rd., near NC Farmer's Market, at the site of the old quarry, a spectral dog roams. On certain nights, at midnight, you can hear a dog howling. The howling gets closer and closer until a huge black dog appears. The dog runs through the site of the old quarry, until it reaches a certain spot. It then jumps into the air and disappears.

Lewis Memorial Park, North Asheville

WhiteGate Inn

By Sarah Harrison

Pritchard Park, downtown Asheville

By Sarah Harrison

Staging area for soldiers during the Civil War. Park is said to be haunted by a phantom Confederate soldier.

Smith-McDowell House

By Sarah Harrison

Smith-McDowell House Museum is a restored period house and history museum located at 283 Victoria Road on the Campus of Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College. Built in 1840, it is the oldest structure still standing in Asheville. It is said to be haunted by four ghosts. See Photographs page for photos from this house.

Chicken Alley

The legendary ghost of Dr. Jamie Smith, who lived at this infamous Asheville locale known as "Chicken Alley" over a century ago. For decades, countless sightings of his ghost have been reported. Dr. Smith was killed in a bar-room confrontation in 1902 at the old historic "Broadway's Tavern". The tavern was destroyed by fire the following year. The close vicinity known as Chicken Alley has been victim to his ghost for over one hundred years!

Chicken Alley is a narrow alley located off Woodfin St. just before the intersection of Woodfin St. and Lexington Ave.

Thomas Wolfe Memorial

Located at 52 Market St., Thomas Wolfe's boyhood home has no official ghost stories.

However, I have interviewed people who have seen ghosts in the home. A woman ghost is seen in the dining room and a male ghost is seen sitting in a rocking chair in an upstairs bedroom. A face has been seen looking out an upstairs bedroom late at night when the home is closed. The sounds of a phantom typewriter have been heard.

The Pink Lady of Grove Park Inn

By Sarah Harrison

Back in 1914, George W. Vanderbilt, the owner of Biltmore House, died from complications from a surgery he had for appendicitis.

His wife was extremely upset. So late at nights, in the Library, she would sit in front of the large marble fireplace, and talk with

George. Though he was never really there. Her servants started to think she was losing her mind. To this day late at night you can

still hear her voice very softly talking with George. Also, You can feel George's presence in the Billiard Room, and the 2nd floor Oak

Sitting room. One of his favorite rooms in the mansion. During rainy late nights, George would sit and read. Workers report

feelings of being watched, apparitions, voices, laughing and screams. A headless orange cat has been seen by numerous visitors

roaming the area between the Gardens and the Bass pond. The Pool Room is also a focal point of unexplainable events. The

sound of people swimming echoes throughout the entire lower floor in the dead of night. Insane laughter can be heard coming

from the drain at the bottom of the pool. It is said to be haunted by a lady in black.

Employees report hearing footsteps on the

second floor. The Halloween Room is said to be haunted by a drunk woman wearing a 1920's flapper outfit.

Zombies of Riverside Cemetery

By Sarah Harrison

Church Street, downtown Asheville

By Sarah Harrison

Jackson Building, downtown Asheville

By Sarah Harrison

The cemetery workers tell stories that Mr. Lewis, who donated the land for the cemetery, rides through the park on a

ghostly horse. There has also been an encounter with a ghostly dog that chased a woman out of the cemetery. See

Investigations page about our investigation of this cemetery. Cemetery is located on Beaverdam Rd.

WhiteGate Inn and Cottage – Two ghosts haunt this charming Asheville bed and breakfast. One who is “calm and

warm” and is known as Miss B., who is seen in the guest rooms. Another, a suicide who hung himself in the

basement, is an “obviously disturbed” spirit.

[Click here for more Asheville ghost stories](#)

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The Curse of Macbeth

They call it The Scottish Play because uttering its true name could bring on the curse associated with it. The story began when William Shakespeare wanted to be on King James I's good side. He wrote a play called Macbeth and was inspired by actual people for the roles of the three witches. It is believed he used real incantations stolen from an authentic black-magic ritual. King James wasn't pleased with the performance even though Will himself played the part of Lady Macbeth after Hal Berridge fell ill and died in 1606. The practitioners weren't amused either. They cast an everlasting spell on the play. It is now believed that if you speak the word "Macbeth" in a theater the production will be plagued with a case of deadly bad luck.

Since then, many have fallen victim to the evil spell.

- A performance in Amsterdam in 1672 ended abruptly when the actor playing Macbeth substituted a real dagger for the blunted stage one, killing Duncan in full view of the entranced audience.
- In 1937, Laurence Olivier took on the role of Macbeth and a 25 pound stage weight crashed within an inch of him, his sword broke onstage and flew into the audience, hitting a man who later suffered a heart attack. In addition, the director and the actress playing Lady Macduff were involved in a car accident on the way to the theatre, and the proprietor of the theatre died of a heart attack during the dress rehearsal.
- In the 1942 Macbeth production headed by John Gielgud, three actors died, and the costume and set designer committed suicide amidst his devilish Macbeth creations.
- Charlton Heston suffered severe burns in his groin and leg area from tights that were accidentally soaked in kerosene in an outdoor production in Bermuda in 1953.
- In 1998, in the Off-Broadway production starring Alec Baldwin and Angela Bassett, Baldwin somehow sliced open the hand of his Macduff.

It can be difficult refraining yourself from speaking one particular word. So, what do you do if you make such a mistake? There are several rituals you can perform to dispel the curse. The most familiar one consists of the person who said the offensive word to leave the theater, turn around three times, spit over each shoulder, knock on the door of the building and ask permission to re-enter. Another method is simply mumbling the phrase "Thrice around the circle bound, Evil Sink into the ground" or yell a stream of obscenities to banish the evil.

Is Macbeth really cursed or have all the disasters in its 400-year history been nothing but a series of coincidences?

Sources: The Austin Chronicle and pret a la z

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[archaicwonder](#)

October 25th 2014, 5:00:51 pm · an hour ago



Ghosts and Legends of Huntingtower Castle, Perth, Scotland

Huntingtower is said to be haunted by “Lady Greensleeves”, a young woman named Dorothea who was the daughter of the 1st Earl of Gowrie. Legend says that she was in love with a servant at the castle and

that the two used to have clandestine meetings at night in the eastern tower, where the servants slept. One night the girl's mother, the Countess, is supposed to have discovered what was going on and made her way across the bridge from the family's quarters in the western tower to the eastern tower to catch the pair. Dorothea heard her mother's footsteps on the bridge and, unable to return to the other tower by that route, made her way to the roof. Here she leapt from the tower to land safely on the battlements of the western tower and returned to her bed where she was soon discovered by her mother. The following day the girl and her lover eloped and no records exist to tell us what happened to them. To this day the gap between the towers is known as The Maiden's Leap.

A number of sightings of the figure of a tall young woman in a green silk dress have been seen in and around Huntingtower over the years, usually at dusk but sometimes in full daylight. Her appearance is said to be an ill omen and a forewarning of some disaster to come. A traveler staying at Huntingtower in the 1930s is reported to have seen Lady Greensleeves in a corridor of the castle. The following day he resumed his journey to Fife and was drowned when he fell from the ferry taking him across the River Tay.

A second Huntingtower legend concerns St Conval's Well, which is beside the road below the castle. The water from this well is meant to have the power to heal, but those who go to collect it must do so in silence: any word spoken on the outward or return journey renders the water useless. Those who go to fetch water are also supposed to leave a small token behind at the well, such as a coin or charm. The well is in good condition and to this day runs clear.

Huntingtower Castle was built in stages from the 15th century by the Clan Ruthven family and was known for several hundred years as the 'House (or 'Place') of Ruthven.' It is located near the village of Huntingtower in Perth, Scotland.

More about [Huntingtower Castle & more photos...](#)

Ghosts of Corfe Castle, Dorset

Corfe Castle, built by William the Conqueror in the 11th century, has a few ghostly tales attached to its history. Before the current castle was built, the site where it sits was the location of the assassination of King Edward (Edward the Martyr) on March 18th 978, on the orders of his scheming stepmother Queen Alfhryth. Edward was stabbed while he was on his horse and then helplessly dragged along to his death by his own steed. The Queen Alfhryth's son Athelred "the Unready", was crowned in his place. Since then there have been reports of hearing a phantom horse's galloping hooves at the bottom of the hill below the castle. Witnesses hear the horse approach and ride by but never see the ghostly animal.

Another tragic tale is that of Eleanor the "Fair Maid of Brittany" (1184 - 1241). In 1203 she was captured since she posed a threat to John, King of England, as she had a legitimate claim to the throne. The beautiful Eleanor was thus taken to Corfe Castle where she remained a prisoner until her death in 1241. William de Braose, 4th Lord of Bramber (1144/1153? – 1211), also found ill favor with the king and as a result, his poor wife and child were starved to death at Corfe Castle. The disembodied sounds of a crying child can sometimes be heard around the castle grounds when there is no child to be found anywhere.

During the English Civil War, Corfe Castle was successfully defended by the leadership of Lady Bankes, a Royalist, in the absence of her husband who was away on business. However in February of 1646, she was betrayed by one of her own people and the Parliamentary soldiers were then able to take control of the structure. Cromwell's soldiers destroyed the castle, reducing it quickly to the ruin that we see today. Soon after, stories began to circulate of ghostly occurrences. The best-known apparition is that of the headless 'White Lady' who sends chills down the spine of anyone who crosses her path. She has been seen mostly near the castle gate where she then fades away into nothingness, leaving witnesses shocked and shaken. It is believed that she could be the ghost of Lady Bankes, Eleanor "the Fair Maid of Brittany" or possibly even William de Braose's wife.

Floating, flickering lights have also been reported moving around the castle at night. One popular explanation for this is that these are the spirits of the Royalists killed while defending Corfe against Cromwell's forces. Whatever the reason, it just adds to the mysterious and creepy charm of this old Norman ruin.

[archaicwonder](#)

October 26th 2014, 4:20:27 pm · 3 hours ago

Ghosts of Duntulm Castle, Isle of Skye, Scotland

According to local legend, the castle was abandoned after the infant son of the chieftan fell from a window to the rocks below and died. The nursemaid in charge at the time was punished by being set adrift on the sea in a small boat. It is said that the phantom cries of a nursemaid holding a dead child can be seen and heard at the castle every now and then.

Another legend says that a poor prisoner was walled up inside the castle tower. His pitiful, muffled screams have been reported coming from inside the castle walls. People have also seen the specter of a weeping nun and the ghosts of three drunkards roaming around the castle grounds.

Historically speaking, the castle was built in the 14th and 15th centuries, when the area was subject to feuds between the rival MacLeod and Macdonald clans. The castle's defenses were improved in the 16th century and by the early 17th century the Macdonalds had finally gained the upper hand in the area. In 1618 the Privy Council and Sir Donald Macdonald of Sleat, the 9th chief, signed a charter requiring him to repair Duntulm so he then built a second tower. Around 1650, the castle's importance peaked when further improvements were made, and a rectangular structure or house was built within the wall. Around 1732 the castle was abandoned. When Sir Alexander Macdonald built a new residence 5 miles to the south he robbed much of the castle's stone as building material. Duntulm Castle is located on Trotternish, Isle of Skye, Scotland.



Ghosts of Meggernie Castle, Perth and Kinross, Scotland

Several ghost stories surround Meggernie Castle, the best-known dating from the time that the house was occupied by the Menzies's of Culdares. An early Menzies of Culdares married a very beautiful woman much younger than himself. However, her youth and attractiveness led him to become jealous of her and he is said to have murdered her in a fit of rage. After concealing her body in a locked chest in one of the castle towers, he absented himself for some time and, after his return, spread the story of how his wife had tragically met her death by drowning whilst the two of them had been travelling in Europe. Although the locals believed the story, Menzies still felt anxious and fearful and decided to dispose of the body in the nearby churchyard. Having cut the body in two, he managed to bury the lower half in the graveyard one night, leaving the upper part still in the chest. However, before he was able to bury the upper half, he met with foul play and the next morning his body was found at the entrance to the tower where the upper part of his wife's body still lay. Although Menzies had clearly been murdered, nobody was ever tried for the crime and his death remains a mystery.

Most ghost sightings have involved guests staying at the castle who claim to have seen the upper part of a woman's body floating through the air. One visitor to the castle claims to have been awakened one night by the feeling of a red hot kiss on his cheek. When he sat up in bed, he saw the ghostly form of a woman's torso moving away from his bed towards the wall, before passing through into the next room.

During restoration work at the castle in the mid 19th century, workmen are said to have unearthed skeletal remains of the upper half of a woman's body. These were removed for burial, but sightings of her ghost were reported after this occurred. Claims have also been made that the buried lower half of the body haunts the nearby churchyard.

Meggernie Castle is a castle in the heart of Perth and Kinross, in central Scotland. The exact date of the erection of the oldest existing part of Meggernie Castle has not been determined, although some sources claim that it was John Campbell of Glenlyon who built it around 1585.

More about [Meggernie Castle...](#)

Ghosts of Rochester Castle, Kent, England



The castle is said to be haunted by Lady Blanche de Warren. Her apparition has been seen many times staggering along with an arrow protruding from her chest. It is said that she was accidentally killed by her fiancé during Easter in 1264. The arrow was shot by her betrothed in an attempt to protect her from the unwanted affections of another man. Tragically, the arrow bounced off the armor of its intended target and hit Lady Blanche in the heart, killing her instantly.

The alleged ghost of Charles Dickens has also been reported at the castle near the Old Burial Ground. Dickens loved Rochester Castle and at one time expressed his wish to be buried there. After his death, he was deemed too important for such a humble resting place so he was buried at Westminster Abbey instead. However, his ghost seems to return to the place that he loved.

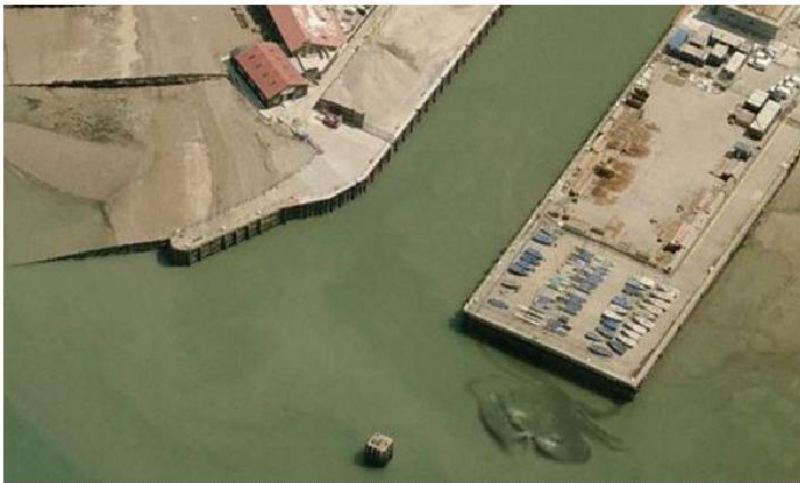
In addition to Lady Blanche and Charles Dickens, a ghostly drummer boy is said to inhabit the castle grounds as well. His drumming can be heard at night every now and then.

Built after the Norman Conquest of England, the 12th-century castle keep is one of the best preserved in England. Rochester was a strategically important royal castle built on the site of a Roman town at the junction of the River Medway and Watling Street, an old Roman road. The castle is a Norman tower-keep made of Kentish ragstone and was built about 1127 by William of Corbeil, Archbishop of Canterbury, with the encouragement of Henry I. Consisting of three floors above a basement, it still stands 113 feet high.

In 1215, garrisoned by rebel barons, the castle endured a long siege by King John. Having first undermined the outer wall, John used the fat of 40 pigs to fire a mine under the keep, bringing its southern corner crashing down. Even then the defenders held on, until they were eventually starved out after resisting for two months. The castle was rebuilt by Henry III and Edward I and remained as a viable fortress until the sixteenth century.

By: Jon Coates

Published: Sat, October 11, 2014



The largest known species is the Japanese spider crab that can grow up to 12ft
[WHITSTABLE]

People have been flocking to a website to judge for themselves whether this picture shows a huge crustacean in shallow water at a harbour mouth in Kent or is just an elaborate hoax.

Quinton Winter, who collates strange and spooky sightings for his Weird Whitstable website, at first thought the image sent to him by a follower showed an unusual sand formation in the shape of a crab but is now convinced it's a true monster of

the deep.

He believes he saw the giant lurking close to the shore when he took his son crabbing last summer in the harbour at Whitstable, which is famed for its oysters.

He said: "At first all I could see was some faint movement, then as it rose from the water I thought, 'that's a funny looking bit of driftwood'.

"It had glazed blank eyes on stalks, swivelling wildly and it clearly was a massive crab with crushing claws.

"Before this incident I thought the aerial photo showed an odd-shaped sand bank. Now I know better."

The picture appears to show an edible crab, scientific name *cancer pagurus*, a species commonly found in British water but which normally only grows to 10 inches, weighing six pounds.

The biggest known crab species is the Japanese spider crab, which can measure more than 12ft.

Giant Sphinx from 'Ten Commandments' Film Unearthed 91 Years Later

yahoo.com



Giant Sphinx from 'Ten Commandments' Film Unearthed 91 Years Later

[View gallery](#)



Hidden for more than 90 years

beneath the rolling sand dunes of Guadalupe, California, an enormous, plaster sphinx from the 1923 blockbuster movie "The Ten Commandments" has been rediscovered and is now

above ground.

The public will be able to see the sphinx on display as early as next year, once it has been reconstructed — a necessity since it became weather-beaten during its stint beneath the sand, said Doug Jenzen, the executive director of the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Center, who oversaw the recent excavation.

The roughly 15-foot-tall (4.6 meters) sphinx is one of 21 that lined the path to Pharaoh's City in the 1923 silent hit, directed by Cecil B. DeMille. He later remade the film, with Charlton Heston as Moses, in 1956. [See Photos of the Film's Giant Spinxes & Excavation]

"[The 1923 film] was one of the largest movie sets ever made, because they didn't have special effects," Jenzen told Live Science. "So anything that they wanted to look large, they had to build large." The facade to Pharaoh's City stood an estimated 12 stories tall and about 720 feet (219 meters) across. "It's giant," Jenzen said.

The film crew originally built the sphinxes' body parts in Los Angeles, and transported them about 165 miles (266 kilometers) to Guadalupe, where they assembled them into giant, hollow statues. The crew even built an extra sphinx so that the actors playing slaves could drag it around during filming, Jenzen said.

Legend has it that after filming ended, the movie crew dynamited the set and buried the sphinxes in a trench, but Jenzen has found little evidence of such a dramatic end. Instead, the wind, rain and sand likely collapsed and buried a large part of the set under the ever-shifting dunes. The sphinxes are in roughly the same place they were during filming, he said.

In fact, the film helped guide an excavation of the site in 2012.

"We'd work during the day, and we'd watch the movie at night to figure out what we were finding," said M. Colleen Hamilton, a historical archaeology program manager and senior historical archaeologist with Applied EarthWorks in California.

Applied EarthWorks archaeologists uncovered one of the 21 giant sphinxes (shown in its original stat ...

The first excavation took place in the 1990s, when the Dunes Center, then a part of the Nature Conservancy, had archaeologists comb through the abandoned movie site. They found dozens of small artifacts, including tobacco tins and cough syrup bottles — likely holding a substitute for alcohol during the Prohibition Era, which lasted from 1920 to 1933, Jenzen said.

"What objects like that tell us is that there wasn't a whole lot to do at the making of this movie," he said. "These guys had a lot of really good times before takes."

Mysterious sphinx

In 2012, the Dunes Center invited an archaeology group to survey the set again. This time, the archaeologists found the head of a sphinx about "the size of a pool table" buried in the dunes, Jenzen said.

The archaeologists excavated the fragile plaster of Paris head, now on display at the Dunes Center, but they didn't have time to exhume its body. Now, two years later, Applied EarthWorks returned with the goal of finishing the project.

But it wasn't to be, said Hamilton. Although the archaeologists had buried the body in sand in 2012 to protect it, the wind had uncovered the sphinx's remains, leaving a greying, crumbling mess.

"The site is basically being destroyed through erosion," Hamilton said. "It's become more critical to try to salvage some materials before they disappear." [Sand Scenes: California's Shifting Dunes]

The wind, however, helped them find the body of another sphinx. Sand had filled its hollow insides, and exposure to the moist beach air had dulled its red and ochre colors, making a careful excavation paramount.

From Oct. 6 to 14, the archaeology team, headed by Applied EarthWorks archaeologist Kholood Abdo Hintzman, slowly excavated the sphinx's body. To keep the paper-thin plaster of Paris from cracking, they wrapped it in cheesecloth soaked in a preservation chemical. Then, they carefully funneled sand out of the hollow statue, replacing the empty space with expanding insulation foam, Hamilton said.

The team could only work a few hours each day. In the morning, the thick, moist fog prevented them from doing their fragile work, and strong winds in the afternoon also stymied their progress. But, after eight days, they finally removed the body and placed it in an off-site building to dry and shrink to its normal size.

Fans of old Hollywood will be able to see the reconstructed body of the sphinx at the Dunes Center in mid- to late 2015, along with the head of the other reconstructed sphinx, Jenzen said. The movie itself is a piece of history, as it was the most expensive film made at that time, costing upward of \$1 million, he said. Some scenes were filmed in Technicolor, and the crew used Jell-O as a special effect during the Biblical parting of the Red Sea.

"I think it's a great piece of Americana," Jenzen said. "But you have to hunker down to watch the whole thing, because it's more than three hours long and it's silent."

Follow Laura Geggel on Twitter @LauraGeggel and Google+. Follow Live Science @livescience, Facebook & Google+. Original article on Live Science.

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Giant squid attacks Greenpeace submarine

October 13, 2014

news.com.au

- 1 day ago



The giant squid took on a Greenpeace sub in the Bering Sea *Source:* Supplied

INCREDIBLE footage has emerged of a huge squid taking on a Greenpeace submarine.

The video was released by Greenpeace on Vine and shows the squid spinning around and squirting black ink

at the sub.

The shocked crew pointed a light at the squid to try and scare it away. The squid continued to thrash around and whip the sub with its tentacles.

The incident occurred in the Bering Sea which is between Russia and Alaska although it is unclear when exactly it happened.

The squid apparently swam away unharmed and did not cause any damage to the submarine.

The only details accompanying the video was a message that said: "It's a squid attacking a submarine during a #BeringSea expedition with @GreenpeaceUSA!"

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James Graham was one of the most notorious quacks of the 18th century. He was also extremely popular, attracting scores of followers who swore by the efficacy of his 'electric medicine.'

Graham was born in England in 1745, the son of a saddler. He studied medicine at Edinburgh, and though he never completed his studies there, he called himself a doctor anyway.

'Dr. Graham' moved to America while he was in his 20s. He travelled around for a while before settling in Philadelphia where he advertised himself as an eye specialist. While in Philadelphia, he became acquainted with Benjamin Franklin's electrical experiments, and he grew convinced that electricity was the cure for all ills.



A practitioner of Electric Medicine at work.
From Johann Gottlieb Schaeffer, *Die electrische Medicin*
(Regensburg, 1766).

The Temple of Health

In 1775 Graham moved back to London where he began practicing his 'electric medicine' and attracting a rich and famous clientele. His therapy consisted of delivering a jolt of electricity to patients through a variety of electrical crowns and thrones.

Emboldened by his success, Graham began converting a large house in an opulent section of London into a magnificent Temple of Health. The doors of this temple opened in August, 1779, and patients began pouring in.

A variety of delights awaited those willing to pay the two-guinea fee to enter the Temple of Health. They could wander through ornately furnished rooms, breathe in the perfumed air, listen to music or hear Graham delivering lectures on health, buy medicines, inspect the 'medico-electrical apparatus,' or watch scantily-clad young women pose among the statues. One of the young women Graham employed was Emma Lyon, who in later years would marry Sir William Hamilton and become Lord Horatio Nelson's lover.

Temple of Health

Emma Lyon, as she might have posed for patrons of Graham's



The Celestial Bed

The centerpiece of the Temple of Health was the 'Celestial Bed,' which was reserved for those able to afford the fee of £50 a night. Graham advertised that anyone who rented the bed for the night would be "blessed with progeny." Sterility or impotence would be cured.

The bed was twelve feet long by nine wide and could be tilted so that it lay at various angles. The mattress was filled with "sweet new wheat or oat straw, mingled with balm, rose leaves, and lavender flowers," as well as hair from the tails of fine English stallions.

As lovers lay in the bed, listening to the soft music playing and breathing in the fragrant air, they could stare up into the large mirror suspended above them on the ceiling. Behind them, electricity crackled across the headboard of the bed, filling the air with a magnetic fluid "calculated to give the necessary degree of strength and exertion to the nerves." The phrase "Be fruitful. Multiply and Replenish the Earth" was inscribed on the headboard.



A depiction of Graham's Celestial Bed

Oh, Wonderful Love

Despite the success of the Temple of Health, Graham was knee-deep in debt by 1784 and had to move to Edinburgh. Here he had a new revelation. Renouncing his old electrical theories, he took up the cause of mud baths, claiming that they were the secret to immortality. He argued that people could absorb all the nutrients necessary to sustain life simply by bathing in mud. He swore that he himself had survived two weeks immersed in mud with no nourishment except for a few drops of water.

Graham eventually was gripped by religious fervor and founded what he called the New Jerusalem Church (he was the only member). He began signing all his letters "Servant of the Lord, O.W.L." (Oh, Wonderful Love), and would engage in bizarre behavior such as stripping off all his clothes as he walked down the street in order to give it to the poor. He was arrested for this kind of behavior in 1794 and died soon after.

James Graham lecturing in Edinburgh, circa 1783



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October 19, 2014 3:21 PM



Bakers put the final touches on a giant "koulouri" (bread ring similar to a bagel or pretzel) that encircled the medieval White Tower, in the northern Greek port city of Thessaloniki on Sunday, October 19, 2014. The 165-m (540-ft) diameter product weighed 1.35 tons before baking. The bakers next plan to build a ring bread around the burial ground in Amphipolis, northeast of Thessaloniki. (AP Photo/Grigoris Siamidis)



THESSALONIKI, Greece (AP) — Greek bakers in the northern city of Thessaloniki have made a giant "koulouri,"

a ring bread similar to a bagel, around the city's most visible monument, the medieval White Tower.

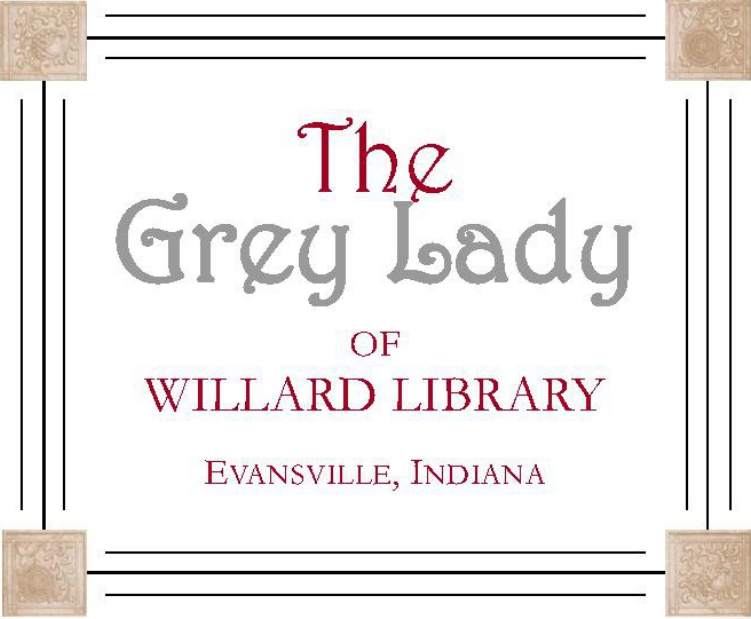
The bread, 165 meters (540 feet) in diameter, weighed 1.35 tons before baking.

A "koulouri" is a staple snack, sold mostly by street vendors. Of Turkish provenance, it can be found throughout the Balkans under different names.

Elsa Koukoumeria, president of the Thessaloniki Bakers Association, said they would try to list Sunday's feat with the Guinness Book of Records, adding that they would soon bake a much bigger one to encircle the burial mound of Amphipolis, northeast of Thessaloniki.

The bread itself is already gone, distributed to bystanders.

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The Grey Lady

OF
WILLARD LIBRARY

EVANSVILLE, INDIANA

*Enjoy this brief history of
the ghostly Hostess
of Indiana's most
famous haunted
library.*

*Feel free to
roam about,
snap photos,
or ask questions.*



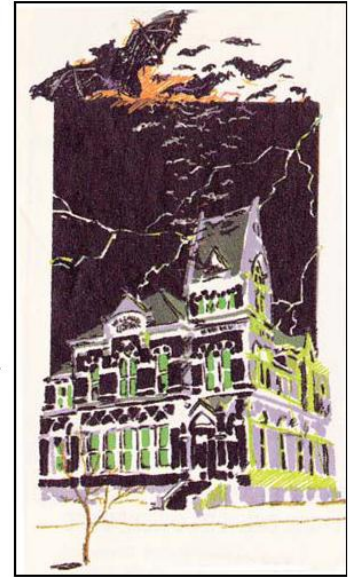


History of Willard Library

Founded by local philanthropist Willard Carpenter in 1885, Willard Library is the oldest public library building in the state. Willard Carpenter wanted to leave a lasting legacy in Evansville, a town he had helped to build through his political and business involvement, and his dream was to build a Willard College for women. Because he had lost much of his fortune through some unfortunate business investments, he was encouraged instead to build this awesome library.

Designed by James and Merritt Reid, the Victorian Gothic library was intended "for the use of the people of all classes, races, and sexes, free of charge forever." For more than 125 years it has served that purpose, and will continue to do so for many years to come.

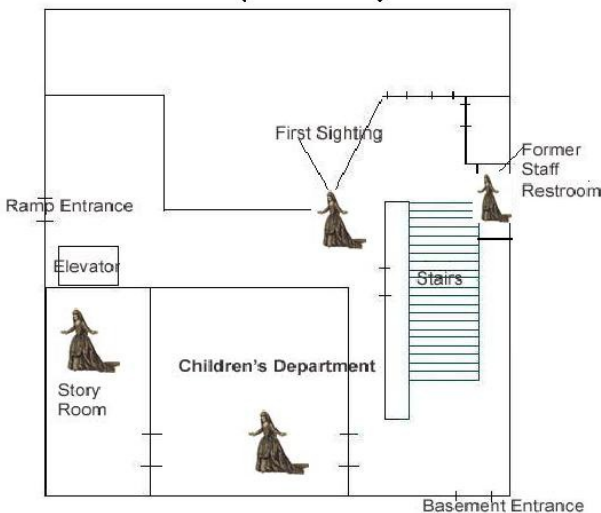
Illustration by Larry Fink. Courtesy Evansville Courier & Press.



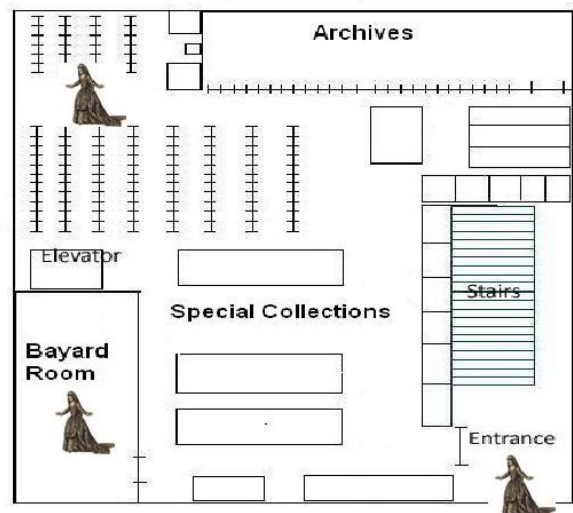
Can You Find the Grey Lady?

The floor plans below show the areas where the Grey Lady has been sighted. If you look closely, you'll see where the Grey Lady has made her presence known. The next page will tell you more about several run-ins with our favorite ghost.

Children's Department (Basement)



Special Collections/Archives Departments (2nd Floor)



- Ladies will sometimes experience the feeling of someone touching their hair or earrings while in the library.
- The Grey Lady seems to like chairs. She likes to pull them out from under tables and a couple of people have even felt her cold presence while sitting in a chair.
- The Grey Lady has a very strong scent that some people describe as lilac or lavender.
- Many people have heard footsteps when no one is around, or books falling off the shelves when it seems impossible for them to fall.
- The Grey Lady is known by her chilly atmosphere.





Children's Department (Basement)

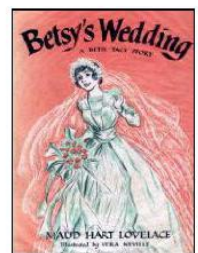


The legend of the Grey Lady originated on a cold winter morning in 1937. The library's Custodian came in at 3 a.m. to fire up the furnace for the day, as was his custom. The furnace was located in the basement, near what is today the Children's Department. Using a flashlight and looking down to see where he was going, the Custodian headed for the furnace room. On his way he nearly bumped into a figure. When he looked up, he saw a female wearing a long dress and a grey shawl. As he stared at her, she seemed to fade into the darkness.

Longtime Children's Librarian Ms. Margaret Maier (left) had the most experiences with the Grey Lady, as she worked in the Children's Department. While the children's area was being remodeled, the Grey Lady even followed her home where she stayed until the renovation was completed. Ms. Margaret believed she and the ghost had formed a special bond, but she still didn't like the Grey Lady following her home.

A number of stories are told about books falling off of the shelves. A former Library Director once instructed employees to no longer tell patrons about the Grey Lady, or even that she existed. A few days later, a patron asked Assistant Children's Librarian Anita Glover about the Grey Lady, and she replied, "If she was here, she's not here anymore." Immediately a book called *Betsy's Wedding* fell off of the shelf.

Prior to the basement remodeling, Special Collections Librarian Joan Elliot Parker entered the basement restroom, locked the outer door and entered a stall. She then heard the two faucets running water into the sink. Parker went out and turned off the faucets—but no one else was in the restroom and the door was still locked.



Special Collections/Archives Departments (2nd Floor)



Jeff Lyons (left), the popular Chief Meteorologist at WFIE in Evansville, has experienced an encounter with the Grey Lady. He came to Willard Library early one morning with his cameraman and a couple of librarians. They went up to the second floor and Lyons asked if they could "set up" a shot. As the librarians were telling him that they would not set up a pre-staged event, several books slid off of a shelf!

One night, when Don Baker was the Director of the library, a security alarm went off. Two policemen and Baker arrived at the library at the same time. One of the policemen and Baker went in to scope out the scene. Following normal procedure, one officer remained in his squad car to watch in case anyone exited the building. While he waited, he saw a woman in the upstairs window and what he believes was a man standing behind her. When Baker and the other officer came out, he asked them if they had caught the people. They insisted no one else was in the building. When Baker suggested that the officer may have seen the ghost, the officer said he had never heard of the Grey Lady before!

Bayard Room (2nd Floor)

Our current Children's Librarian Rhonda Mort came to Willard Library for a meeting before she came to work here. The meeting took place in the Bayard Room and was standing room only. Rhonda noticed one empty chair and sat down. While she was sitting there, she became unbearably cold and also noticed that the people sitting on either side of her were leaning away from her. She decided to leave for a few moments and got warm again. When she returned, the chair was still empty, even though people were still standing. Later, after she came to work at Willard, she tried to explain the occurrence to Greg Hager, the Director of Willard Library. When she went to show him the chair, it was no longer there, and Hager said to his knowledge there had never been a chair in the Bayard Room like the one she described.





Adult Services Department 1st Floor

The Elevator

There haven't been any Grey Lady sightings on the 1st floor, but there have been a couple of very interesting unexplained experiences.

A former Custodian got on the elevator on the 1st floor early one morning and pushed the button to go down, but nothing happened. He tried a couple of more times, but nothing worked. Frustrated, he said out loud, "I want to go down." And that worked!

Also, before shelves blocked the view of the elevator from the Berry Plastics building, employees working night shift there would often report seeing Willard's elevator going up and down all night.



Louise Carpenter

A picture of Willard Carpenter's daughter, Louise Carpenter, hangs on the 1st floor. Although we don't know who the ghost really is, some people suspect it might be her. One time, two young ghost hunters came in to seek out the Grey Lady. They stopped when they saw Louise's picture and one commented that she wasn't very attractive. Later, the same person said she felt quite unsettled during the rest of her visit to the library—possibly because she insulted Louise!

The Grey Lady in the Media

Websites dedicated to Willard Library:

www.willard.lib.in.us

www.facebook.com/pages/Willard-Library-of-Evansville-Indiana/116687743349

Friends of Willard Library (FOWL):

www.willard.lib.in.us/friends_of_willard_library/index.php

Online stories about the Library/Grey Lady:

<http://skivis.wordpress.com/2010/02/14/the-coolest-library-ever/>

Websites to view the Ghost Cam:

www.libraryghost.com

www.willardghost.com

Books containing stories about the Grey Lady:

Haunted Indiana by Mark Marimen

Haunted Travels of Indiana by Mark Marimen

TV Appearances:

Discovery Channel's *Real Ghost Hunters*

Syfy Channel *Ghost Hunters*

Travel Channel *Ghost Adventures*

Book about Willard Library:

Where There's A Willard (on sale at Willard Library)



Written and designed by Erin Bowen, Hannah Ganote, Peggy Newton and Shawn Whiting.

We extend our sincere thanks to Betty Palmer for her tireless research and dedication to Willard Library and the Grey Lady.

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Email: willard@willard.lib.in.us ☐ Visit us in person and at www.willard.lib.in.us

Open Mon. & Tues. 9-8, Wed.-Fri. 9-5:30, Sat. 9-5, Sun. 1-5 Central Time



Grieving Parents Surprised When Not-Dead Son Answers the Door

gawker.com

Kelly Conaboy

Filed to: NICE STORIES ABOUT PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT DEAD

- JUSTIN PRIEST
- ALASKA

10/11/14 1:01pm Today 1:01pm

In a story perfect to tell with a "spooky" voice when things get quiet at your next social gathering, a grieving Alaskan couple about to inform their son's girlfriend of his death was shocked this week when their "dead" son answered the door. Ahh!

The AP reports Karen and Jay Priest were awoken at 3 a.m. and told by an Alaska State Trooper that their son, 29-year-old Justin Priest, an Anchorage resident, was killed in a car accident in Juneau. The Priests then drove to Anchorage to tell their other son, Cody, who Karen says collapsed when he heard the news.

Together, the family drove to tell Justin's long-time girlfriend Julia. According to Karen's report to the AP, Jay knocked on the door:

"It opens and right here is Justin. I don't even see it but Jay is sobbing. It doesn't compute to me. Then I see him. You want it to be true, but you go, 'Am I hallucinating?' Justin didn't know what was going on."

Justin says he was mostly asleep, it being 5:30 a.m., and confused about all the yelling, saying, "They were yelling, 'Praise Jesus! It's a miracle!'"

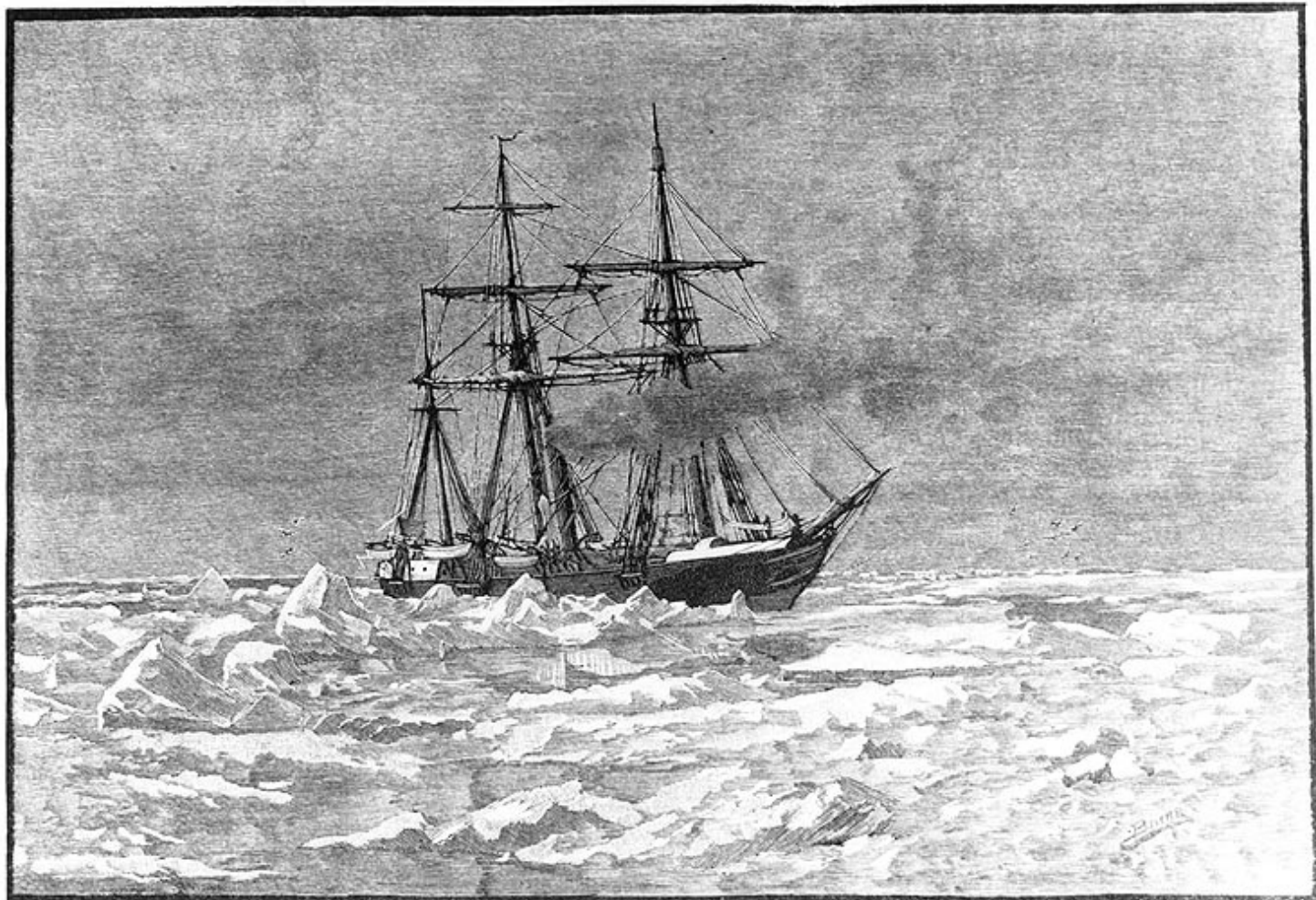
After "lots of hugging, lots of tears," Justin got in touch with Juneau police who, the AP reports, have apologized—they were looking for a different Justin Priest, as it turns out. Police are reportedly now reviewing their records to find out what caused this intensely awful error.

(Practice that part in your spooky voice. *"The police apologized and are reviewing their recooooorrrds."*)

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THE SINKING OF THE JEANNETTE.



ENTERING THE ICE.



DRAGGING THE BOATS OVER THE ICE



NEWCOMB. NOROS. WILSON. TONG SING. ANEQUIN. LEACH.
MELVILLE. DANENHOWER.
LAUDERBACK. BARTLETT. COLES. NINDERMANN. MANSSEN.
THE SURVIVORS OF THE EXPEDITION AT YAKUTSK.

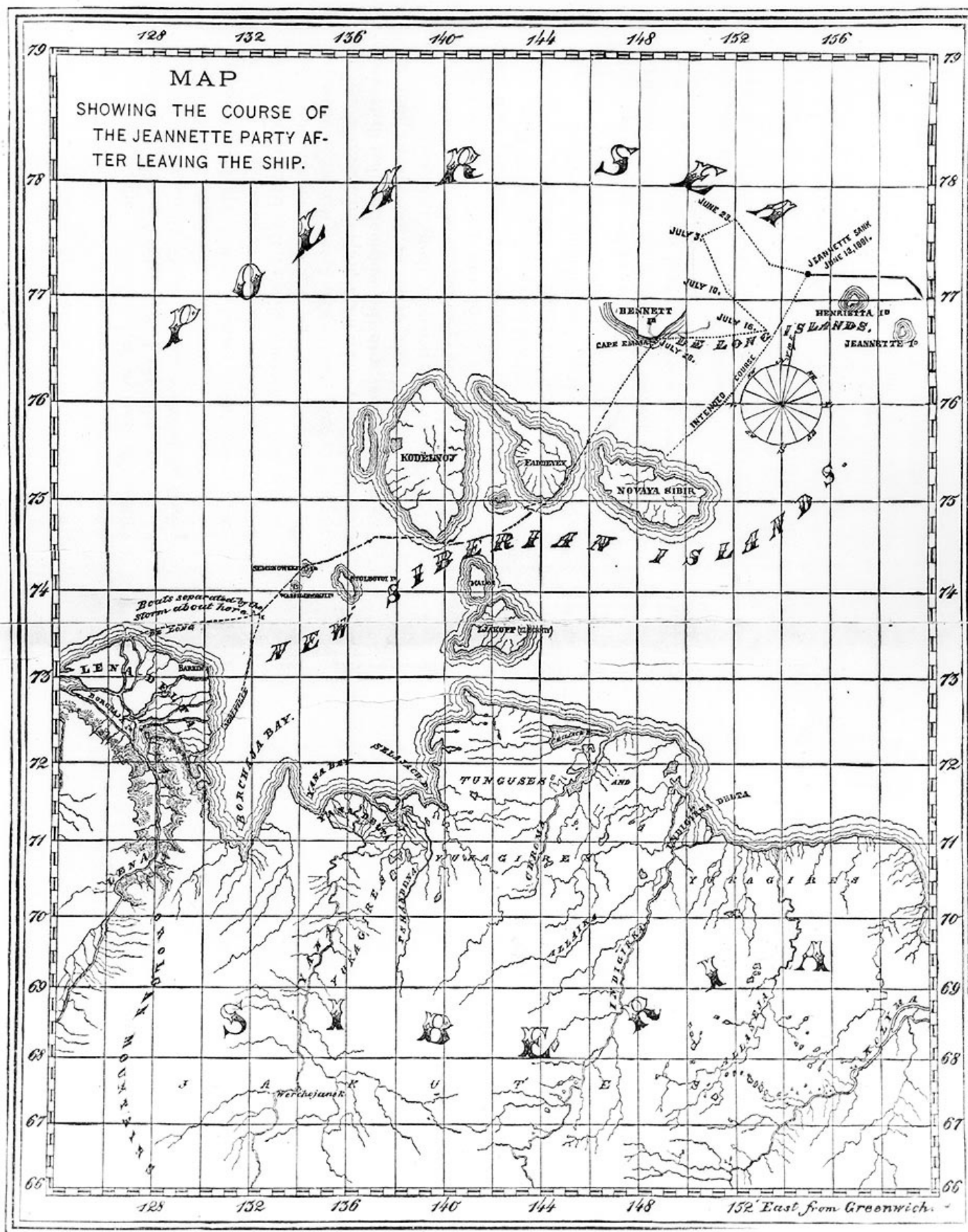


RETURNING FROM A BEAR HUNT.



LANDING ON BENNETT ISLAND.

Photo # NH 92140 Map showing the course of the Jeannette party after leaving the ship, 12 June - 19 Sept. 1881





First Cutter: De Long.

THE SEPARATION OF THE BOATS IN THE GALE.



WADING ASHORE.



NINDEMANN AND NOROS IN SEARCH OF HELP

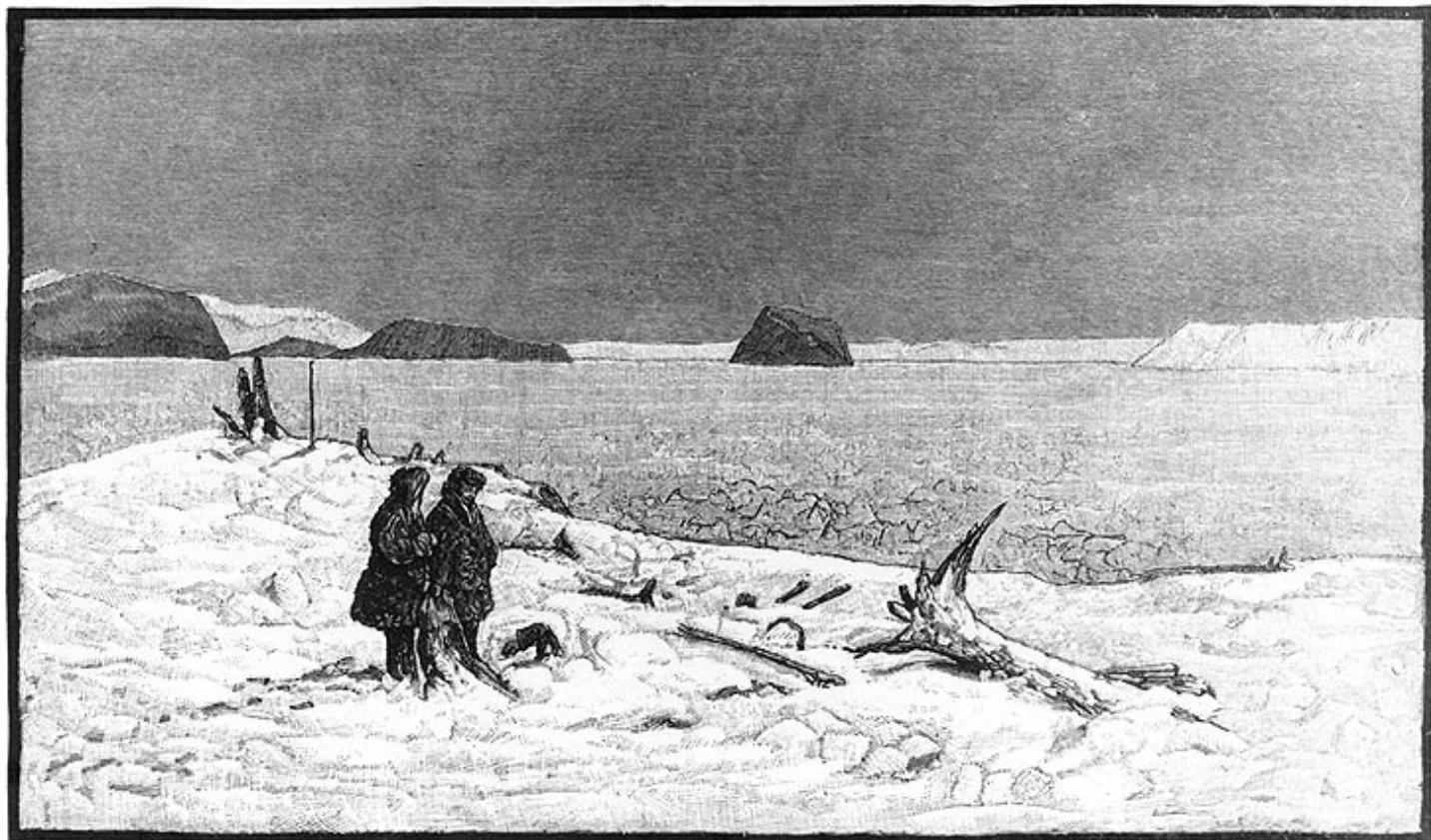
Friday October 21
131st day. Kaack was found dead
about midnight between the Doctor
and myself -

Lee died about noon -
Read prayers for sick when he found
he was going.

Saturday October 22nd
132^d day. Too weak to carry the bodies of Lee
and Kaack out on the ice. The Doctor, Collins and
I carried them around the corner out of sight. Then
my eye closed up.

Sunday October 23^d
133^d day. Everybody pretty weak. Slept or rested all
day and then managed to get enough wood in before
dark. Read part of Divine Service - Suffering in
our feet - No foot gear.

Monday October 24th
134th day. A hard night.



FINDING THE BODIES OF CAPTAIN De LONG AND HIS COMPANIONS.

The Society for Psychical Research was founded at the University of Cambridge in 1882 and poltergeist activity has been a central area of its investigation

"This is the only ghost story that I know. It is a true story, and I have never seen it in print, and never heard it explained away." So begins the tale told by a graduate of the University of Oxford, writing on 22 December 1894 in the *Hampshire Telegraph*.

The early part of that century, we are told, was a time when Brasenose College undergraduates "were conspicuous among their fellows for profane iniquity". The "most audaciously iniquitous" formed a society, reviving the 18th-century Hell-Fire Club, and "its avowed purpose was the promotion of all manner of wickedness". At its gatherings, there was no chairman, and at the head of the table stood a vacant chair, the theory being "that it was occupied by our ghostly enemy, the invisible Prince of Darkness". One night, the principal of Brasenose had been dining at Exeter College and was returning about midnight along Brasenose Lane. "The ground-floor windows, looking out upon the lane, are barred, so that undergraduates may not issue through them upon prohibited nocturnal rambles." When the college clock struck midnight, "a sudden flash of lurid light illuminated one of the ground-floor windows...An awful vision met his eyes. For first he saw a weird and fearful figure – a figure with horns and hoofs and a girdle of fire...whom he recognised as Apollyon, the enemy of man. And then he saw that Apollyon had hold of an undergraduate...and was dragging him violently through the window bars." When the vision passed, the principal hurried on to the college gate and rang the bell.

It soon transpired that the Hell-Fire Club had been meeting that night. One member had stood up "to make a special parade of blasphemy", and as he did so, had been struck down dead. We further learn that the cause of death was "something too horrible to write down here" and that, before the man's funeral, undergraduates were invited to view the coffin in the college hall, "to find a warning for our own lives in the horrible fate that had overtaken our contemporary".

Sadly, this is one of those university ghost stories that is probably just too good to be true. For one thing, it is exactly the kind of thing that a 19th-century clergyman might have wanted people to believe – and a clergyman was its source, having been resident in Brasenose at the time. (The Brasenose Hell-Fire Club, which did exist, was in full blaze around 1828 to 1834.) It is also hard not to feel that, as retold in 1894, the tale has something of the flavour of the stories the author M. R. James would be telling at Cambridge a few years later. They share, for example, the figure of Apollyon, from the Book of Revelation.

Let's try another tale – this time, a little less far-fetched. At St Mary Hall, Oxford, in spring 1892, after a student, a Mr Colthurst, had been disturbed by noises in the night, another undergraduate, Mr Ackerley, waited on the staircase and was presently rewarded by "a peculiar noise, as if a walking stick standing against a wall gradually slid down and came with a clatter upon the floor". The sound came nearer, but they could see nothing. The next night,

the pair returned with a friend, Mr Vincent, armed with swords, and witnessed a small flint stone clatter to the ground, seemingly from nowhere. A little later, advancing footsteps on the stairs caused the ghost-hunters to flee ignominiously to their rooms. Were the footsteps really those of William King, a former principal of the hall? Although buried at Ealing Church, Middlesex, King had had his heart “walled up in the Hall chapel”, and it was “supposed that at intervals in his spiritual existence he feels the need of a heart, and journeys from Ealing Churchyard to Oxford to see the lost organ”, to quote from a copy of *Trewman’s Exeter Flying Post* published in 1892.

Again, sadly, too good to be true... The culprit turned out to be Vincent himself, who had been prompted to a fairly elaborate hoax by Ackerley’s interest in ghosts and theosophy. With some newspapers reporting the haunting as authentic, *Jackson’s Oxford Journal* was soon gloating about its rivals’ credulity, while by mid-March we hear of how Ackerley “has written to the papers to forgive his persecutors”.

However little truth these tales contain, they do serve to remind us that people often expect to feel, hear or see something ghostly in the kind of old buildings many universities occupy. This leads to a related possibility: namely, that certain people sense or see ghosts because there is something unusual about their brain, or because something unusual (such as infrasound or an electromagnetic field) is affecting their brain at that moment. Research on this topic (pioneered by neuropsychologist Michael Persinger at Canada’s Laurentian University) could imply that the associated hauntings are pure hallucinations. It could, however, in some cases indicate that an unusual brain state allows perception of something real, which others cannot sense or see. Scientific evidence suggests that there is often something very distinctive about the brains and bodies of people who have acted as poltergeist agents.

And this brings us to a second point about universities and ghosts: for well over 100 years now, certain academics have been taking the paranormal seriously and attempting to study it in a scientific way. Ackerley’s interest in ghosts was probably related in some degree to this new climate, with the Society for Psychical Research having been founded at the University of Cambridge in 1882. One of the central areas investigated by the society since then has been poltergeist phenomena. In such cases, objects are moved around inexplicably – sometimes violently, and sometimes very carefully. Unsourced noises are heard, varying from scratching through to rapping or thunderous hammering. Objects, substances or liquids appear from nowhere or disappear into nowhere. In a very large number of instances, these and other bizarre events closely follow one person – usually a child or adolescent, and often someone suffering some degree of emotional trauma. In some cases there is evidence to suggest the presence of a ghost; in others little or none. But what is clear is that poltergeists usually involve particular people, not particular places.

Study of the 19th century in particular shows us that there were a lot of ghost hoaxes, that many people needed little prompting or evidence to believe in a ghost and, indeed, that a startling number of people died of terror from relatively crude ghost pranks. But it also suggests that (as reported and witnessed by police, ministers and others) certain poltergeist cases are very, very difficult to explain away. If they were hoaxes, then they were probably among the most spectacular magic tricks ever performed.

What of the peculiar incidents that took place in the lodge of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, late on the night of Friday 6 August 1841? "The nurserymaids...were terrified by hearing several strange and mysterious noises; the sounds appeared to proceed from the staircase; presently they ceased, and the door of the nursery was slowly opened, and a figure of tall and unnatural proportions presented itself...The appearance had a head white and ghastly, long legs, also white, but the body was distinguished only by a dim outline. The body was a shadow. The affrighted maids rushed shrieking from the room – the lodge was aroused – the police were called in, but no trace of the apparition was visible, unless a curious odour which perfumed the apartment might be considered so," reported *The Morning Post* on 12 August of that year.

As a hoax, this would hardly be impossible to stage. But it is very likely that one of the maids would have been the right age for a typical poltergeist agent. Both the noises and the odour fit poltergeist cases. The apparition, though more unusual, also makes some sense. In a number of well-documented instances, the ghost does indeed look like the shadow or dark outline of a person, with no features or colour. If this was a ghost and not a hoax, then it is possible that it had found sufficient energy (from the poltergeist agent) to materialise part of itself, but not all.

Compare this with the goings-on at Whittemore House, in St Louis in the US, in the 1960s. Built in 1912, this grand edifice was donated to Washington University in 1966, and is now its faculty club. Nothing supernatural was reported at Whittemore until 1967, when builders were remodelling it for its new purpose. When they did so, they are said to have discovered the bones of a child. Some thought these belonged to an infant girl who tragically choked to death in her cot on New Year's Eve, 1936. During the renovation, builders "would set their tools down momentarily, then turn to find them moved, or gone". The attic door would continually slam, even when propped open with a heavy doorstop. Later, with the remodelling completed, two office workers, one of whom was named Myrna, "became alarmed when they frequently heard footsteps moving down the carpeted hall – footsteps on a wooden floor". Even "after an unseen force shoved Myrna down some stairs...she still believed that someone was playing a prank". Accordingly, the next time Myrna heard the steps, she went out to confront her tormentor.

She found herself staring at a man with grey hair and a beard, wearing a red plaid shirt. "She was sure the man was flesh and blood, until she looked below his belt. There was nothing below his waist. He was just a torso floating above the carpet. Then he vanished," reported the *Boca Raton News*.

The discovery of the bones might have predisposed people to imagine ghosts. But Myrna continued to believe in a hoaxer for as long as she could. Not only that, but she was sure that the man was real, until she noted his missing legs. Intriguingly, her sighting fits two oft-described features of ghost encounters. One is that the apparition is lacking something, whether colour, definition or part of their body. The other is that the ghost-sighter, far from being overly nervous or superstitious, is initially not looking for a spectre. In many cases, including one recounted to me by a friend, they assume the most natural explanation: this is a living person. As this implies, sometimes ghosts look as real as you or I.

Hauntings in some cases could indicate that an unusual brain state allows perceptions of something real, which others cannot sense and see

An interesting variant on this experience happened to the polymath Andrew Lang, in Oxford in 1869. On Saturday 23 October, Lang received a note stating that John Conington, the Oxford classicist, was dangerously ill. Lang responded: "He can't have been very ill on Thursday (or yesterday, I can't be sure which), for I met him near Corpus." As Lang explained later: "I was under the lamp in Oriel Lane, about nine at night, in winter, and I certainly had a very good view of him...I am constantly failing to recognise people. Conington, however, was not easily mistaken, and I know no one in Oxford who was at all like him." The problem with Lang's sighting was not that Conington was dead, but that he was on his deathbed, 100 miles from Oxford. Although he died only on Saturday 23 October, it was later confirmed that he believed himself to be dying by the Thursday.

Lang's attitude to the supernatural continues to be disputed long after his own death in 1912, but one biographer, William Donaldson, emphatically describes him as "bullishly sceptical". He clearly was not expecting to see a ghost and did not believe he had seen anything unusual until he heard of Conington's plight on the Saturday. We can only regret that this scholar – unlike Horatio – did not attempt to speak to the figure he saw in Oriel Lane.

Many of these features come together in the remarkable case of the Peterhouse ghost, which hit the headlines in December 1997. In April, two butlers at this most ancient of Cambridge colleges had gone into the 600-year-old Combination Room to collect plates. Matthew Speller, 22, told journalists: "We were chatting away when we both saw something move slowly across the room, about 15ft from the middle to the window. I just looked at Paul [Davies] and said 'Did you see that?'" Both men described the ghost as human-sized, but said it was impossible to distinguish features or determine its sex as it travelled about one foot off the ground. They added that it stood out brightly in the dimly lit room, and that they felt a chill around them. After a further sighting the pair "felt sufficiently alarmed to interrupt a dinner to inform the Dean". The Dean, the Reverend Graham Ward, told reporters: "I saw the absolute terror on the faces of those two, so I don't doubt that something happened. In a college full of unreliable people, they are completely reliable."

Many other fellows were sceptical or jocular about the claims. But matters changed when Peterhouse's senior bursar, Andrew Murison, had a still more striking experience in November of that year. According to one report, "Murison, formerly an agnostic about ghosts, entered the dimly lit Combination Room late one evening and became aware of 'a presence' in one corner. 'At first I thought it was Max Perutz, one of our Nobel Prize winners, because it was smallish, slightly built and balding,' he said. 'It was wearing a wide collar, like a pilgrim, and seemed to be holding a large hat. I moved closer to get a better look. I wasn't frightened in the slightest; I was more concerned about frightening it away. It was very benign. After a few seconds, it quietly disappeared. The room was very cold, although a fire was still burning in the grate.'"

For many at Cambridge in 1997, the question was not "was there a ghost?" but "who was the ghost?" A popular choice was Frances Dawes, a bursar of Peterhouse who had hanged

himself in the college in 1789, after blaming himself for the controversial and probably corrupt election of a new master. However, as William Rees-Mogg pointed out in *The Times* (in an article supporting the existence of ghosts), Murison's description "suggests the costume of the 1650s; if he were the bursar who hanged himself in 1789, he ought to be wearing a cravat and a tie-wig".

Whoever the culprit was, he was known to announce himself in typical poltergeist fashion. Murison's first sense of something odd that night was a knocking under the window, while Speller and Davies had also heard a "rhythmical knocking which appeared to move around the panelling". A fourth witness, the senior butler, had "noticed a solid wooden door shaking violently". He could not open it for some time, and when the shaking stopped there was no one on the other side.

Why did this ghost appear in two such different forms? One possible answer is that, initially, it had not derived sufficient energy to manifest itself fully until November. In many poltergeist cases, the well-worn horror film staple of the sudden chill is reliably reported. It is not unreasonable to suppose that this chill is created by something sucking ambient heat from a room, precisely to gain the energy needed for manifestation.

Anyone who ever thinks they have seen a ghost and fears ridicule might be comforted by the telling words of Murison. "It was quite an extraordinary experience. I didn't mention it to the other fellows for a while. I'm supposed to be a financial administrator, not some nutcase who goes around seeing ghosts."

The phantom menace: curses and paranormal sightings

When the wreckage of a fabled 19th-century Arctic ship was found last month, it revived interest in a "cursed" painting on display at Royal Holloway, University of London.

Man Proposes, God Disposes (1864) was inspired by the disappearance of Sir John Franklin and two explorer ships, which set off in 1845 to find the Northwest Passage in the Canadian Arctic. The work of Edwin Henry Landseer, famed for his animal portraits, it depicts two polar bears devouring a ship's remains – and, it appears, those of the passengers.

According to legend, students who sit directly in front of the painting during an exam "will fail – unless it's covered up", explains Laura MacCulloch, curator at Royal Holloway's Picture Gallery.

It is even said that one student was so disturbed by the painting that they went mad and committed suicide. "I've heard it was a girl, I've heard it was a boy, I've heard about three [different] ways that they killed themselves," MacCulloch told reporters last month, adding that no record has been found of any such death. Nonetheless, the painting is still hidden behind a Union Jack flag during exams.

Tales of paranormal activity at universities abound. The University of Wales, Newport (now part of the University of South Wales), for example, is said to be haunted by the 6ft tall ghost of Bertha Ramsey, a matron found dead after falling down the stairs during the Christmas

holidays in 1962. "Since her death, there have been numerous sightings of her ghost roaming the corridors, near her room on the ground floor," according to Rosemary Rawcliffe, who embarked on a book about the ghost during her time as a student at Newport.

At the University of Exeter, a phantom dressed in painter's overalls has been seen walking down the corridors. And at Durham University, the ghost of Frederick Copeman, who studied at the institution in the early 19th century, is thought to roam. He lived in the highest room in Durham Castle, the story goes, and threw himself from the cathedral tower, believing that he had failed his exams. It later transpired that he had been awarded a first-class degree.

Author:

Richard Sugg is a lecturer in the department of English studies at Durham University. His books include *Mummies, Cannibals and Vampires: The History of Corpse Medicine from the Renaissance to the Victorians* (2011). He is currently completing volume one of *Faces of the Vampire* and researching a book on poltergeists.

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Haunted Hadrian's Wall: Milecastle 42 Roman Fort

Hadrian's Wall, dating from AD 122, extends from Segedunum at Wallsend, across the width of the country to Bowness on Solway in Cumbria. At every mile along the way there was a small fort, a 'milecastle', where the soldiers who guarded the Roman Empire resided. Many different accounts of paranormal activity have been reported at these milecastles over the centuries. Milecastle 42 (aka Cawfields Milecastle) is one of these haunted Roman forts. Shocked visitors to the fort ruins have reported seeing an apparition of a man in Roman armor during broad daylight! His specter hovers in the air at the level where Hadrian's wall used to reach, about 16 feet high.

The ghost has been seen so many times that a backstory has developed explaining his persistent presence. He is known as Lucius, a sentry at Milecastle 42, who made the mistake of falling for a local Briton girl. The girl's brother would smuggle goods over Hadrian's Wall in and out of the Empire. She became close to Lucius for the sole purpose of gaining information to help her brother. When the brother's intrigues were finally discovered he was captured, and then indicated that Lucius was the sentry who was carelessly leaking information to his lover. Lucius then realized that this girl had been using him and committed suicide, dooming his spirit to roam the area forever. You can read about the activity at Milecastle 42 in these books: *They Still Serve: A Complete Guide to the Military Ghosts of Britain* by Richard McKenzie, *Ghost Trails of Northumbria* by Clive Kristen and *Haunted Northumberland* by Darren W Ritson.

Milecastle 42 was built by the Second Augustan Legion on a steep south-facing slope south of of Cawfield Crag. It is on a well preserved section of Hadrian's Wall.

Long Island Haunts: 13 Creepiest Haunted Places on Long Island

By Tristram Fox on October 27th, 2011

Originally the ancestral home of Native Americans and later settled by Europeans during the 1600s, Long Island is rich in history and loaded with folklore, myths and urban legends. From ancient Native American burial grounds to remnants of the Revolutionary War to Gatsby-era mansion estates, Long Island is hallowed ground—the stage for countless triumphs and tragedies throughout the centuries.

It's no wonder some tales have thrived just as long—along with past inhabitants.

Herein lies a guide to 13 of Long Island's most creepiest and prolific haunts.

1. Mount Misery & Sweet Hollow Road, Melville/Huntington

Various tales of horror and dread surround this winding incline through dense woods and up alongside a hilly precipice, some of which are detailed in *Weird New York: Your Travel Guide to New York's Local Legends and Best Kept Secrets* by Chris Gethard and *Long Island's Most Haunted: A Ghost Hunter's Guide* by Joseph Flammer and Diane Hill, among other books. One legend has it there was a hospital here that burnt down sometime during the 1700s or 1800s—with some patients and staff still trapped inside—only to be rebuilt on the same site to tragically burn down again. Another speaks of a deranged nurse who set the blaze and roams the woods with or without a number of faceless children. Some claim to have seen burning spirits fleeing from the grounds, accompanied by screams.

Then there's the legend of the mass suicide—in which several teenagers hung themselves beneath the Northern State Parkway overpass. Visitors who honk their cars' horn or flash their headlights three times can see their lifeless bodies, it goes. A shadow figure and glowing ghost-woman known as the Lady in White—believed by some to be a depressed patient who set the hospital afire, and in doing so, killed herself—can also reportedly occasionally be seen. Some profess her to be Mary, killed by a car or murdered on the road, who haunts a nearby graveyard. Then there's the mysterious gypsy woman dressed in red, who appears out of thin air. There's also the tale of the phantom police officer who is missing the back of his skull.

A Suffolk County homicide detective tells the *Press* the mutilated body of a child was discovered on Sweet Hollow Road in 1976.

2. Kings Park Psychiatric Center, Kings Park

Established in 1885 on more than 800 acres of land, Kings Park Psychiatric is a mini city of restless, anguished souls. Once home to more than 9,000 patients housed in more than 150

buildings, the complex became a self-sufficient farm community. It had a library, firehouse, morgue and cemetery. Most of the compound has fallen into disrepair, but the screams, moans, banging and clanging continues, eternal reminders of the pain suffered amid its walls. Electric shock therapy, insulin shock therapy and prefrontal lobotomies were performed regularly at Kings Park Psychiatric. There is an extensive network of underground tunnels throughout the grounds connecting the buildings—the sites of countless inhuman atrocities of torture and abuse.

3. Lake Ronkonkoma

LI's largest freshwater lake, Lake Ronkonkoma is awash with legends and stories, from tales it's infested with piranha to the belief it is bottomless, has magical healing powers or is connected to the Long Island Sound and Great South Bay via underground channels. Lake Ronkonkoma is a kettle lake, formed by the recession of glaciers and more than 60 feet deep. Historically, the lake was known as a highly sacred site of religious rituals for ancient Native American Indian tribes, who would travel 100 miles or more in pilgrimages to undergo vision quests on its shores, according to *Native New Yorkers: The Legacy of the Algonquin People of New York* by Evan T. Pritchard.

There are also various versions of stories about the lake's infamous Indian princess, "The Troubled Spirit of the Lake," as described in 1967's *Heather Flower and Other Indian Stories of Long Island* by Verne Dyson. One tale speaks of a Native American maiden sacrificed in its waters to appease a god. Another tells of the Lady of the Lake, a Native American princess betrothed and in love with a member of her tribe who was murdered by a settler on the eve of their wedding—so she tied rocks to her ankles and committed suicide in the middle of the lake. Her body was never found, the legend goes, though she returns annually to bring another male to his watery death in revenge for her love's slaying. The phantom princess can sometimes be seen, so it continues, lamenting along the shore and luring future victims to their demise. At least one male drowns in Lake Ronkonkoma each year, the legend goes—recanted in various forms through a litany of books, including *Haunted New York: Ghosts and Strange Phenomena of the Empire State* by Cheri Revai and Heather Adel Wiggins.

Bizarre lights, sounds and whirlpools are also rumored to emit from Lake Ronkonkoma's spiritual waters, further manifestations of her eternally broken heart.

4. Raynham Hall, West Main St., Oyster Bay

Named after Raynham Hall in Norfolk, England—which is infamously haunted by the Brown Lady, captured in a 1936 photograph—this mid-18th century Oyster Bay home of the Townsends was confiscated by the British during the Revolutionary War and served as headquarters for the Queen's Rangers, led by Lt. Col. John Graves Simcoe. Simcoe fell in love with Sally Townsend, who overheard he and British Major John Andre, a frequent guest, discuss a plot involving Benedict Arnold, then one of Gen. George Washington's most trusted generals. Sally told her brother who, as a member of the Culper Spy Ring, relayed it to Washington, according to 1989's *Haunted Houses USA* by Dolores Riccio and Joan Bingham. Andre was hung for treason but his spirit remains behind, contends *Spirits of '76: Ghost Stories of the American Revolution* by Daniel W. Barefoot—along with the ghosts of

Sally and Simcoe.

5. Katie's, West Main Street, Smithtown

Take a stroll down West Main Street in Smithtown, stop in to Katie's, and say hi to bartender Charlie Klein who is about 115 years old—give or take a few years. He may be missing a limb or two and he might knock a few glasses off the shelves. For years, staff and patrons at this local bar—which has been featured on A&E's *Paranormal State*—have reported strange occurrences, from swinging doors to apparitions. The property has a long history. A hotel burned down in 1909 on this spot, reportedly killing a victim in the basement. Other tales claim a 16th century murderer haunts its corridors. But the most sociable ghost is Charlie, believed to be a bootlegger and bartender during the 1920s Prohibition era who lived across the street from Katie's and took his own life.

6. Morgan Hall, Route 107, Glen Cove

Built in 1910, the former estate of financial tycoon J.P. Morgan is haunted by the ghost of his young daughter Alice, who succumbed to typhoid fever in the mansion, according to *Haunted Places: The National Directory* by Dennis William Hauck. The place was utilized by the Russian Embassy for years afterward before turning into a Catholic school and convent in the 1960s. Alice's spirit, the book contends, has appeared wearing a long black dress and can be heard walking in the attic and corridors.

PRESS EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH CHRIS LUTZ ABOUT HIS FAMILY'S TIME INSIDE THE AMITYVILLE HORROR HOUSE

7. Wickham Farmhouse, Route 25, Cutchogue

The farmhouse, built in 1704, is one of the oldest English-style houses in New York State. On June 2, 1854, however, it became the site of a brutally vicious slaying. James and Frances Wickham, along with a 14-year-old servant boy, were axe-murdered in their bedrooms by a 21-year-old Irish farmhand named Nicholas Behan who, following an intense manhunt, according to *The New York Times* archives, was discovered hiding in nearby woods, put on trial, hung and buried in an unmarked grave. Descendents witnessed a ghost standing over their bed in 1988, according to *Haunted Places: The National Directory* by Dennis William Hauck, and sealed off the bedroom.

8. The Normandie Inn, Smithtown & Lakeland Ave., Bohemia

Originally built as a residence for a Czech baron in the 1920s, according to a 2008 *Long Island Business News* article, it became a speakeasy during Prohibition and the Hotel Chateau La Boheme before its last incarnation as a restaurant. The Gothic-style structure on the corner of Smithtown and Lakeland has been boarded up since 2004 and is currently once again up for sale. The Normandie Inn is rumored to be haunted by a woman named Maria, who was allegedly strangled to death in the upstairs back bedroom and heard walking the hallways and knocking on visitors' doors when it was a hotel. There have also been reports of cold spots and other apparitions. Its most recent owner told *LIBN* the place's previous owner

informed him that long-silent room service bells once began ringing without explanation and footprints once appeared on a just-shampooed rug in a locked bedroom.

9. Reid Ice Cream Grounds, Atlantic Ave., Blue Point

In 1966, the lifeless body of a murdered 20-year-old go-go dancer/part-time bank teller was discovered here in a sump, her hands and feet bound, her throat slashed. Legend says she's never left.

Country House Restaurant, Route 25A, Stony Brook

Besides its delicious food and romantic atmosphere, the Country House Restaurant serves patrons and visitors a smorgasbord of history. Originally built as a farmhouse in 1710, the place was purchased by Thomas Hadaway, a prominent English-American actor and comedian in 1838, according to *Stony Brook* by the Three Village Historical Society, who was noted for throwing parties involving the occult. Many séances were conducted here, with those in attendance including renowned LI artist William Sidney Mount. Mount, in his notebooks and diary entries, believed he was able to communicate with the 17th century Dutch Master Rembrandt, who gave him advice through letters and influenced his work, according to *Haunted Visions: Spiritualism and American Art* by Charles Colbert.

The Country House is haunted by the spirit of a woman named Annette Williamson, who is believed to have been murdered near a fire place in one of the restaurant's many rooms during the Revolutionary War, its present owner Bob Willemstyn tells *Ghosts of Long Island* author Kerriann Flanagan Brosky and LI paranormal researcher Joe Giaquinto on a recent segment of their blog talk radio show *The Kerriann and Joe Show*. Willemstyn says he has personally witnessed Annette's full apparition, that her spirit regularly blows out light bulbs and causes electricity flashes, and that other spirits dwell the premises as well.

11. Fire Island Lighthouse, Fire Island

The original lighthouse, standing 74 feet high, was constructed of stone in 1826 and served as a beacon to distressed whaling and merchant ships for about 30 years. It was replaced by the current lighthouse, built in 1858, which is rumored to be haunted by a curator who committed suicide prior to its resurrection.

12. Winfield Hall, Crescent Beach Road, Glen Cove

The former 62-room Italian Renaissance mansion estate of Frank Winfield Woolworth was allegedly a hotbed of occult activity, according to *Haunted Places: The National Directory* by Dennis William Hauck, and its owner died just two years after it was built in 1917, of infected teeth. Woolworth's daughter Edna committed suicide behind its ornate walls, and former students of Grace Downs Model and Air Career School—which had a home in the estate during the 1960s and early 1970s—speak of her bedroom always being locked, yet the sound of moving furniture emanating from within.

13. Southampton Campus, Stony Brook University

Built in 1712, the gray-shingled, three-story windmill at Stony Brook University's Southampton campus stands as one of LI's oldest. Relocated in 1890 from Southampton Town, where it served as a landmark for seafaring ships, to its present location as a part of the former Claflin Estate, the windmill was also once a former cottage and housed such guests as playwright Tennessee Williams, who reportedly penned one of his plays during his lodging. According to campus lore, the owner's daughter had a playroom inside the thing, and one day she fell down the windmill's steep interior stairs, broke her neck and died. The 8- or-9-year old girl is still there, say students, and her face can be seen peering from its various windows. Students also report to the *Press* the eerie feeling of being watched as they pass it by.

(Last updated on Tuesday, October 15th, 2013) and filed under Entertainment News, Long Island News, News. You can follow any responses to this entry through the feed. You can leave a response, or trackback from your own site.

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Hauntings & Death Omens of Inveraray Castle, Argyll

Many ghostly occurrences have happened at Inveraray Castle, some of which date back to the original structure previously on the site. In 1644, the Marquis of Montrose drove the Duke of Argyll from the castle. Some of the staff were left behind, among them was a young Irish boy who played the harp. The Marquis's men, being outraged that an Irishman would work for their sworn enemy, slaughtered the boy and left his quartered body on the Duke's bed. Legend has it that the boy's spirit is now attached to that bed, which has been moved to the MacArthur room of the current castle. People have reported the bed moving on its own along with a chair being flung across the floor nearby. While in the MacArthur room, staff and visitors complain of headaches, cold spots and feelings of dread. Strange phenomena in the library is also blamed on the phantom harpist. On occasion harp music is heard there along with the sound of books being thrown. Sometimes visitors to the library feel like bursting into laughter for absolutely no reason.

There is a death omen associated with the phantom harpist and the MacArthur room as well. It is said that harp music can be heard coming from the room when a member of the family is about to pass away. The last report of this phenomenon was when the 10th Duke died in 1949. Another reported death omen at Inveraray Castle is a phantom galleon that sails on nearby Loch Fyne. It is believed that the ghost ship comes ashore to claim the life of the Clan Campbell Chief. Allegedly in the 18th century, one of the chieftains was so certain that the ghost ship was coming to claim him that he actually drank poison so as not to disappoint the phantom galleon's crew.

A physician named William Hart was walking on the castle grounds with two other men on July 10th of 1758. The three men all witnessed the vision of a battle taking place in the sky above the castle between Highland and French soldiers. Two other women who were nearby at the time saw this strange site as well. The witnesses reported seeing the Highlanders retreating, leaving behind many of their fallen comrades. Several weeks after this vision happened, news of the French and Indian War reached Scotland that a regiment of Highlanders had lost almost 300 men while attacking the French at Fort Ticonderoga in New York. What they had probably seen was a ghostly glimpse of the Battle of Carillon, also known as the 1758 Battle of Ticonderoga, which happened on July 8th 1758, two days

before the vision occurred. Many military historians have cited the Battle of Carillon as a classic example of tactical military incompetence.

The ghost of a young woman, allegedly murdered by Jacobites has also been seen roaming around castle. She is usually dressed in a grey gown and is therefore known as the Grey Lady. Her exact identity is unknown.

The first castle at Inveraray was a stronghold for the Campbells in the 15th century, built by Colin Campbell, the 1st Earl of Argyll. It was however burned down by the Marquis of Montrose in 1644. The current castle was commissioned by Archibald Campbell, 3rd Duke of Argyll. It was built on the original site of the village of Inveraray. When Archibald decided to build the castle, he had the village of Inveraray demolished and moved a mile away so it wouldn't spoil his view of the new castle.



His Name Was John Chapman

In September of 1797, twenty-three year old John Chapman decided to leave his family's farm in Massachusetts and go west to seek his fortune on the frontier. Settlers were pouring into western Pennsylvania in search of cheap land, and Chapman thought that he could make money by starting an apple tree nursery there and selling seedling trees to other settlers as they arrived.



Birth Record of John Chapman

Chapman knew that almost every farmer who settled in the west would plant a large orchard in order to produce alcoholic apple cider. At that time, most Americans did not eat many apples, but they liked to drink cider with every meal. Even small children drank hard cider with breakfast, dinner, and supper, because it was thought to be the healthiest beverage available. Unlike creek water and unpasteurized milk, which often harbored deadly germs, cider drunk in moderation seldom made anyone sick. alcohol-free "sweet" cider was more wholesome than hard cider, but without refrigeration it fermented after a few days in the barrel.

Chapman calculated that he could sell thousands of young apple trees on the frontier, where every settler would want to plant at least fifty fruit trees to provide his family with a year's supply of cider. Most settlers would plant even more trees – perhaps two hundred – to produce extra cider for sale. Chapman knew that settlers could start their orchards from seed, but reasoned that most would prefer the faster and easier method of planting young trees. He hoped that he could sell thousands of two-year old seedlings for six cents each in western Pennsylvania.

To get started, Chapman visited a Massachusetts cider mill during the fall apple harvest. He collected all of the apple seeds that he wanted, free of charge by picking through the waste pulp of the mill.

With a big sack of apple seeds among the provisions in his backpack, Chapman begun hiking west in late October of 1797. The weather was mild during the first weeks of his hike, but in mid-November, after he had passed the last settlements of the Susquehanna River Valley, Chapman encountered a blizzard. He was hiking along a mountain ridge in central Pennsylvania, days away from the nearest cabins, when the storm hit.

Chapman built a fire and lean-to shelter, and then he relaxed on a bed of boughs while the wind howled around him for days. When the weather cleared, Chapman discovered that it was impossible for

him to resume his journey because of massive snowdrifts that buried the trail more than a yard deep in most places.

Another traveler might have been alarmed by this life-threatening difficulty, but dammit all, Chapman was in it for the booze! He returned to his fire, stretched out on his bed of boughs, and gazed thoughtfully at the snow-covered beech trees that towered around his campsite. Eventually he devised a plan. He got up and used his knife to cut the beech strips, bent the branches into the shape of snowshoes, and fastened them with strips of cloth from his jacket.



John Chapman's Favorite River

After a full day of tinkering, he had made a serviceable pair of snowshoes. With these laced to his feet, he walked over the drifts for a week until he reached his destination – the future site of Warren, Pennsylvania, where a land company had opened an office with a cabin. The handful of settlers were so impressed by Chapman's improvised snowshoes that the story of how he survived the blizzard became a permanent part of local folklore.

That winter Chapman chose a site for his tree nursery at the place where the Big Brokenstraw Creek joins the Allegheny River, about six miles from Warren. With an axe as his only tool, he killed the big trees on three acres of land by “girdling” each tree, slicing off the bark in a circle clear around each trunk. He then built a rough fence of logs and brush to keep deer out of his clearing. In the spring he planted apple seeds on the fenced land.

Chapman knew that the trees that grew from his seed would yield diverse varieties of bitter, inedible crabapples, but that was fine with him. He was not interested in raising sweet, edible apples, because such trees cannot normally be grown from seeds; they have to be propagated artificially by grafting. Chapman disliked grafting because he considered it unnatural, and he knew that his customers would be perfectly satisfied with bitter crabapples because they made good cider.

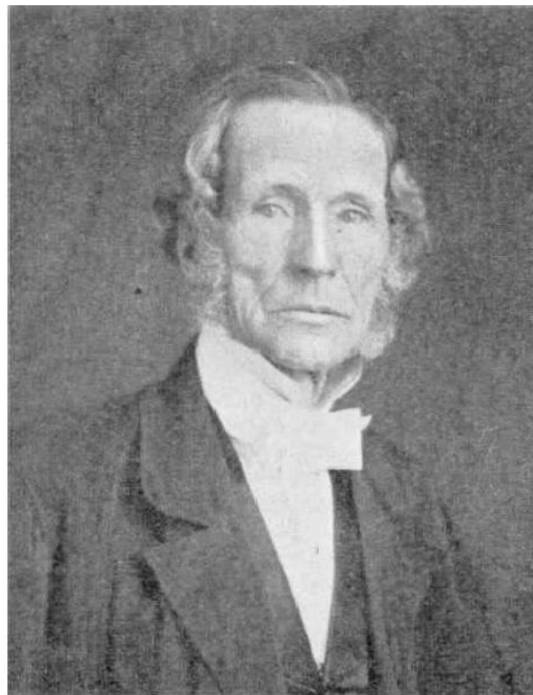
That summer Chapman's seedling trees flourished, but few new settlers moved into the area around Warren. Chapman decided that he had chosen the wrong place to plant his nursery, since there were not enough customers.

To be sure of locating in an area that would attract plenty of customers for his seedlings, Chapman decided that he would need to plant nurseries at many places in western Pennsylvania and eastern Ohio. He left Warren and never returned.

Chapman spent the ensuing years planting tree nurseries at various locations in western Pennsylvania and eastern Ohio. Every fall he would steal bushels of apple seeds from eastern cider mills. He would carry these seeds to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where he would load them into a dugout canoe. He would then paddle up the Allegheny River or down the Ohio River until he located a promising site for a future town, where he would go ashore and spend a few weeks preparing two or three acres of ground for a nursery.

Chapman probably did most of his work of site selection, tree girdling, and fence-building in the fall and winter months. By spring he would have multiple clearings ready for planting, and he could travel swiftly by canoe from one clearing to another, to get all of his seeds into the ground at the right time of the year.

Chapman's younger brother, Lawrence, became interested in his enterprise and for a while accompanied Chapman on his nursery-planting expeditions into the wilderness. Eventually Lawrence grew tired of camping in the forest, and he abandoned the project. But John Chapman remained so enthusiastically committed to tree planting that people began to call him "Johnny Appleseed," a nickname that he liked.



Portrait of John Chapman

Chapman found that he enjoyed living alone in the woods. He was an amiable man who did a lot of talking whenever he got the chance, but he did not mind solitude. He was fond of books, and often carried one tucked into his belt. When he was not doing strenuous work of clearing land for nurseries, he enjoyed loafing beside his fire, observing nature or reading.

By 1802 Chapman had planted nurseries at many scattered locations along the Allegheny and Ohio Rivers and their tributaries, and he was earning a steady income from the sale of seedling trees to

new settlers. He had become good at guessing where the next settlements were likely to appear, and his most profitable nurseries usually stood right beside a growing town. Sometimes he would obtain legal title to the land on which he planted a nursery, but usually he would not bother to do that. He did not remain long enough at any of his nurseries but hired local settlers to serve as his agents, tending to profitable seedlings and selling them on commission.

Despite Chapman's increasing prosperity, he continued to lead an itinerant life, spending months every year traveling up wilderness tributaries of the Ohio River in dugout canoes. His growing attachment to his primitive way of life left him with little use for the hoard of cash that he was accumulating.

Since outlaw gangs occasionally preyed on river traffic, Chapman usually carried no money, keeping his cash hidden at various locations in the woods. He carried nothing anybody might be tempted to steal – no gun, no traps, no coat, no shoes – nothing of value except for his books and his apple seeds, which no one else wanted.

Chapman's lack of tangible possessions not only kept him safe from outlaws but also smoothed his relations with the Natives whose villages he visited on his travels. Most Natives believed that a true friend would gladly share all of his possessions, and this belief caused endless trouble between Native Americans and settlers. To the settlers, the natives were “Indian givers” and thieves; to the Natives, the settlers were treacherously false friends. But Chapman got along very well with the Natives.

No details of his life among the Natives have been recorded. If he had a Native Wife, he did not tell any of the settlers. All that is known for certain about Chapman's interactions with the Natives is that he spoke Algonquian dialects fluently and that he was able to travel freely from one Native Village to another in Ohio during the War of 1812, whereas any other settler would have been killed.

Chapman's habit of traveling with few possessions may have been a sensible and practical solution to the challenges of frontier life, but it also had a philosophical basis. He was profoundly influenced by the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, a Swedish scientist who became a Christian mystic. Chapman agreed with Swedenborg, and also with the ancient Greek philosopher Plato, that the material world is an imperfect reflection of an ideal spiritual world, and that attachment to material things leads to unhappiness.

Chapman tried to avoid becoming attached to any luxury. When he visited a frontier cabin and was invited to sleep in a bed, he would politely decline and instead lay down to sleep on the floor by the fire. He refused to harm any animal, and he lived on a vegetarian diet that included wild nuts, roots, and herbs. He told one settler that, when he had been trapped by ice on an island in the Ohio River for several months, he and survived on a diet of nothing but butternuts. He avoided coffee and tobacco, but was fond of cider and applejack, the hard liquor made by allowing cider to partially freeze and then skimming off the ice.

Chapman loved to talk about Swedenborg's intellectual and theological notions, such as his doctrine that the Bible should **not** be taken literally, instead it should be read as a metaphoric guide to Platonic philosophy. When Chapman discoursed on such topics, people on the Ohio frontier listened politely, but they seldom made much effort to understand him entirely. According to folklore, Chapman was extremely religious, but his ideas about heaven and hell were unconventional, and he got into many baffling, complicated debates with fundamental preachers.

Despite his peculiarities, Chapman was a well-respected man on the frontier. Everybody knew that was a successful businessman with a good education. Although he habitually went barefoot and dressed the threadbare clothing and odd-looking homemade hats, he always looked clean and tidy, with his long hair neatly parted in the middle.

Chapman was widely admired for his generosity. His agents had standing orders to sell seedlings on credit to anyone who could not pay cash, and Chapman never made the slightest effort to collect a debt, so payment was effectively voluntary. Chapman also made gifts of cash to needy people; he once handed fifty dollars to one astonished widow. To spare lame horses from slaughter, he bought lame horses and arranged for them to be put out to pasture.

Chapman became a hero to many frontier settlers during the War of 1812, when he gave the settlers advance warnings of Native Raiding Parties. During the War of 1812, when frontier settlers were tortured by Great Britain, Johnny Appleseed continued his wanderings and he was never bothered by anyone. On many occasions the impunity with which he ranged the country enabled him to give both sides early warning and ample time to flee to safety.

When the war ended in defeat for the Ohio Natives and the withdrawal of their British Allies into Canada settlers poured into Ohio faster than ever before, and Chapman became more prosperous than ever. He became a real estate developer, buying tracts of land for sale to settlers.

Chapman's nurseries and real-estate developments allowed him to send impressive sums of money to the New Church in Philadelphia, which sought to spread the doctrines of Emanuel Swedenborg in America. Chapman's profits also supported the family of his sister, Persis; Chapman employed his sister's ne're do-well husband, William Broom.



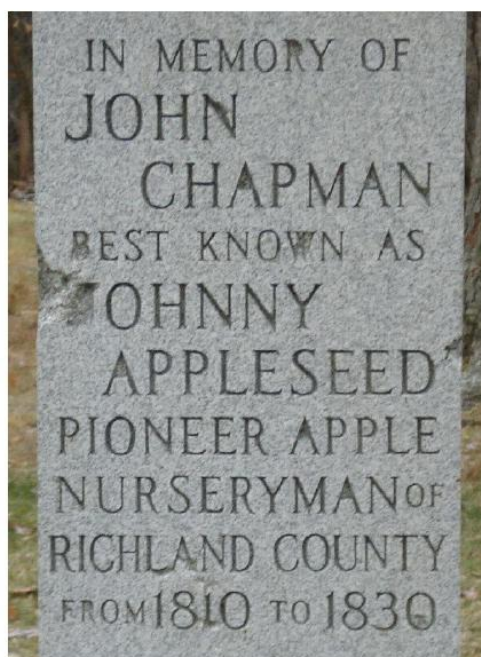
2 popular images of Johnny Appleseed
Not even close to reality

His sister's descendants inherited Chapman's estate when he died of pneumonia in 1845, age seventy, in Fort Wayne, Indiana. His heirs were not able to track down all of his scattered real-estate holdings and they recovered none of his cash savings, which presumably remained hidden in rocky clefts and hollow trees. They nevertheless collected nearly six hundred dollars worth of property, a considerable sum at that time.

In 1871, more than two decades after his death, Chapman became a legendary figure to Americans when Harpers New Monthly Magazine published an article about him by W.D. Haley. The article depicted Chapman as an impractical religious mystic; *"he trod the earth with bare and bleeding feet, intent only upon making the wilderness fruitful."* Fanciful engravings that illustrated the article showed Chapman dressed in an old coffee sack and carrying a staff, an outfit that made him look like a saintly hermit in a Victorian Bible illustration. The article incorrectly portrayed Chapman as a poor man who owned only one small tract of land.

Haley avoided mentioning that Chapman's apples were useful mainly for manufacturing an alcoholic beverage. Although one line in the article stated that Chapman raised trees as a business, overall the tone of the article gave readers the false impression that Chapman had planted the apple trees mainly for charitable reasons. Later writers exaggerated the distortions in Haley's article to create a purely fictional image of Chapman as a pious vagrant who randomly scattered seeds to provide free apples for future generations of Americans.

A more realistic view of Chapman was revealed by the research of Robert Price, who's 1954 book *Johnny Appleseed: Man and Myth* is still considered the authoritative biography of John Chapman.



Monument in the Ohio River Valley, not his headstone

SOURCES:

- Haley, W.D. *Johnny Appleseed, Pioneer Hero* Harpers New Monthly Magazine, November 1871
- Price, Robert. *Johnny Appleseed: Man and Myth* Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1954
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For many years now there have been stories of a degenerate race of people who live an isolated existence removed from the civilized world in New Jersey's Ramapo Mountains. As far back as the revolutionary war New Jerseyans have heard, and told, tales of a motley group of social outcasts who had taken refuge in the northeastern hills of the state and inbred to the point of mutation. The group, which has been alleged to be comprised of a mongrel hybrid of renegade Indians, escaped slaves, Hessian mercenary deserters, and West Indian prostitutes, have come to be known as the Jackson Whites.

Probably the most puzzling question about this mysterious Jackson Whites clan is not who they are, but what the origins of their legend is. Most commonly associated with the Ramapo Mountain peoples of Mahwah, Ringwood, and the southern New York state towns of Hillburn and Suffern, the moniker “Jackson Whites” is now, and has almost certainly always been used as a derogatory name. Who the term refers to, and how it has endured for over two centuries until the present is most likely due to some less than scholarly historical texts that have either inadvertently or knowingly transcribed local legends as authenticated fact.

Probably the earliest written reference to the Ramapo Mountain People to be found is contained in an article entitled “A Community of Outcasts” in *Appleton's Journal of Literature, Science and Art*, dated March 23, 1872, which read:

“In relation to this particular people, there are half a dozen legends current, all possessing more or less romance and attractiveness; but the most favored one is, for a rarity, the most reasonable.

The people will tell you that this stain upon their fair country was first put there by fugitive slaves, more than a hundred years ago.

There was gradually added to these fugitive slaves, fugitives of other descriptions, and the general antagonism to the world made each individual endure the others. They buried themselves deep in the fastnesses and gorges of the mountains, and reared children, wilder and more savage than themselves.”

An early literary reference to the Ramapo people as “Jackson Whites” dates back to 1900 in J.M. Van Valen's *History of Bergen County*, which states:

“The Ramapo Indians sometimes visited the settlements in the township of Franklin. They were known formerly as the Hackensack Indians, but are more properly described the “Jackson Whites.” They bear little resemblance to the Indians, yet as tradition gives it they are descendants of Hessians, Indians, and Negroes, but know nothing of their ancestry, so ignorant have they become.”

Arthur S. Tompkin's 1902 *History of Rockland County, New York*, told the saga of the Jackson Whites this way:

"The Jackson Whites originated when the Indians were yet living in the lowlands along the Ramapo Mountains. The first race came by a union between the Indians and half breeds on one side, and colored laborers brought from the lower part of the county to work in the Ramapo factories on the other side. The colored people were either freed slaves or their children grown up, and many of the names today may be traced as identified with some of the old Holland pioneers of Orangetown, for the slaves in old times bore the surnames of their masters. Inter-marriage among these people has caused them to degenerate intellectually if not physically."

In 1906-7 the New Jersey historical society's annual report contains this passage explaining the Jackson Whites curious lineage:

"The Secretary wrote that his understanding had been that they [the Jackson Whites] were a people of mixed Indian and Negro blood, the Indian strain showing in their reticence, and the Negro strain in their indolence and improvidence. They are supposed to be the offspring of former Negro slaves, runaways, and free Negroes, who sought refuge in the mountains where they could eke out a living by cutting hoop-poles and wood for charcoal, in the days of charcoal iron furnaces. They have been regarded as outcasts, and hence have been allowed to sink into a degraded state..."

In 1911 the Jackson Whites' story took on a pseudo-scientific authority when a University of Pennsylvania anthropologist named Frank Speck published an article that claimed that:

"Algonquian Indians, probably Minisinks of the Delaware, with some of the Tuscarora who lingered for a rest in the Ramapo Valley on their way from Carolina in 1714 to join their colleagues, the Iroquois, in New York State. To this small nucleus became added from time to time runaway Negro slaves and perhaps freed men from the Dutch colonial plantations in the adjoining counties in New Jersey. Vagabond white men of all sorts also contributed a share to the community from the early days until now. The Jackson Whites may be regarded, therefore, as a type of triple race mixture."



Stag Hill Sign

Also written that same year was an even less well researched study by the head of New Jersey's Vineland Training School, Henry Herbert Goddard, entitled, *The Jackson Whites: A Study in Racial Degeneracy*. Taking his liberties with the history of the Ramapo's inhabitants, Goddard gave his own slant to their lineage.

"These loose living descendants of slaves were gradually crowded back into the mountain districts where they lived from hand to mouth and where their numbers were from time to time recruited by whites whose tendencies were similar to their own...But how account for the Indian blood that shows itself so conspicuously among this race today? Undoubtedly a large part of it comes from Indians who were formerly held as slaves..."

The Indian blood found in the Jackson Whites whether it came down through individuals held as slaves or through isolated free Indians who intermarried with the emancipated Negroes, is supposed to have belonged to a remnant of the Algonquin Tribe-to

the Minsi, or Wolf Clan, who were natives of the Upper Delaware Valley in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York... there were also a few families of the Tuscarora Indians who remained in the Ramapo mountains after their tribe had made there a three years sojourn, from 1710 to 1713, on its way to join the five nations in New York State."

It is worth mentioning here that Henry Herbert Goddard is also the man responsible for the 1912 book entitled *The Kallikak Family*, in which he documented his study of "hereditary feeble-mindedness" in a particular New Jersey Pine Barrens clan of his own creation.

The single document that was probably most responsible for solidifying the Jackson Whites' legend in New Jersey folklore was a self published 1936 book entitled *The Origins of the Jackson Whites of the Ramapo Mountains* by John C. Storms. Relying more heavily upon the day's prevailing mythology than on any personal investigation, Storms, a small town newspaper editor, exercised his well known penchant toward over embellishment and romanticism. It was Storms' contention that Tuscarora Indians, who had fled North Carolina after a war with white settlers which had lasted from 1711 to 1713, were the first ingredient in a racial stew of people that would come to be known as Jackson Whites. According to Storms' booklet:

"Originally the Ramapo Mountain region was a favorite resort of the Hagingashackie (Hackensack) Indians, part of the Leni Lenape family of the Iroquois [in fact, they were part of the Algonquin, not the Iroquois, language group]... These aborigines had practically all disappeared by the end of the seventeenth century. However, a few remained together with a scattered population that had sought the security of the mountains to evade their brother white man, his laws and customs. Thus it was a sort of No Man's Land.

The first real influx of a permanent population in the Ramapo Mountains was in 1714. This was a remnant of the Tuscarora Indians... Arrived at the Ramapos a stop was made for a time; perhaps it was because there were to be found congenial spirits among the remaining Hagingashackies and the wild renegades who were hiding there. But the ultimate object was to unite theirs with the powerful Five Nations that ruled the country to the northward..."

The second strain in the Jackson Whites' bloodline, according to Storms, was contributed by Hessian mercenaries fighting for the British during America's Revolutionary War.

"Reaching America under duress, placed in the forefront at every important battle in which they were engaged, beaten by their officers with the broadside of swords if they attempted to retreat, made to do the menial labor of their British companions, their fate was a particularly cruel one. With no interest in the outcome of the military struggle, unfamiliar with the theory of 'liberty' for which the Americans were fighting, it is not to be wondered at that they proved unfaithful, and deserted the army at every opportunity.

In the fighting that took place in the vicinity of New York City, from the camps scattered throughout this region, and at the marches across New Jersey, these men, known by the general name of Hessians, fled to the nearest place of safety – the Ramapo Mountains. There was no possibility of escape, no opportunity to return to their native land, so they made for themselves homes in their retreat, mated with those they found already there, and reared

families."

The third genetic element in the Jackson Whites' lineage, as professed by Storms was derived from English and West Indian Women who were forcibly brought to New York to serve as concubines for British soldiers.

"The British War Office had a problem on its hands – keeping New York City loyal to the Crown as a Tory city, while keeping thousands of its soldiers in the military camp that General Clinton had established there..."

But there was a way out of the difficulty, a way that had long been in vogue by warring European nations, in fact, by England herself. A little judicious questioning and a man was found who would accept the undertaking. The man's name was Jackson – history has not preserved for us anything more about him than this, not even his given name.

A contract was entered into that Jackson was to secure thirty-five hundred young women whom England felt it could very well dispense with, and transport them to America to become the intimate property of the army quartered in New York City, thus relieving the tension now felt that at any moment these same soldiers might take to themselves such of the residents as temporarily pleased their fancy...

Jackson set his agents at the task of recruiting from the inmates of brothels of London, Liverpool, Southampton and other English cities along the sea coast...If a young woman or matron chanced to be on her way home from her occupation, or on the street on an honest mission she fared the same fate as the inmates of the houses of ill fame, and many a respectable working girl or young housewife was shanghaied, and carried off to a life of shame across the sea.

Jackson loaded his human cargo into vessels in the harbors, forced them below decks and battened down the hatches to prevent escape, even from suicide by leaping overboard. Every available vessel that was seaworthy was in use to transport soldiers and supplies for the army, none could be spared except the merest hulks. Twenty of these Jackson used. All set sail for America, but on the way across the ocean a violent storm arose. Some of the vessels became separated from the others. At last, one by one they reached New York – nineteen of them. Somewhere one had foundered in mid ocean, carrying down to a more merciful fate fifty women and the entire crew...

Accordingly, one vessel was dispatched to the West Indies, most accessible British possession, loaded with negresses collected in the same manner as the others had been, and brought to New York.

...Lispenards Meadows [a low, swampy, salt meadow on the west side of Manhattan near the present entrance to the Holland Tunnel] had been secured as quarters for the anticipated "guests," and was being duly prepared...."

In 1783, when New York was repatriated by American Army forces, the stockade of women was evacuated and the prisoners beat a hasty retreat along with British soldiers and Tories.

"Suddenly someone remembered the hundreds of English women imprisoned at Lispenard's Meadow...A hurried order was given, a messenger rode pell mell to the Meadows, unbarred and threw open the big gate of the stockade, and hurried back to escape from the city with his companions...Out of the stockade gate poured the motley throngs of women, after several years of confinement in their noisome quarters.

By far the larger portion of the human stream that flowed out of Lispenard's Meadows on that eventful Evacuation Day of 1783, by some unknown means, reached the western shore of the Hudson... the horde has been estimated at about three thousand or slightly more... To the company was added a few soldiers who preferred to cast in their lot with the refugees, having formed a quasi-attachment for some member of it. Tories, too, who had been unable to secure passage to the Canadian ports considered their bodily safety rather than their social standing...Then, too, the confusion of departure afforded an added opportunity for a number of Hessians to make their escape...

Then followed another memorable trek. Across the Hackensack Meadows, up the Saddle River valley, these derelicts made their way on foot....Pillaging of orchards and deliberate raids on fields and gardens provoked the farmers, who drove the wanderers on with hard words and often with harder blows, all of which was retaliated. No one wanted these unfortunates...

At last, with Oakland past, the crowd entered the Ramapo Pass and soon found itself in a country that, while wild and inhospitable in character, yet offered the boon of peace; there was no one to drive them away. Here the colony scattered, finding shelters in the woods and among the rocks. Here the individual members found companionship of peaceful Indians, escaped outlaws, Hessians, runaway slaves — there was ample companionship and it was readily accepted."

Storms cites a New York Tory newspaper known as *Rivington's Loyal Gazette*, as the first publication to coin the name "Jackson Whites."

"In these columns occur references of visits paid by various companies of soldiers to "Jackson's Whites," and sometimes to "Jackson's Blacks." These sly hints are made in a jocular vein, seem to carry no stigma, reproach, or violation of military discipline. The term "Whites" and "Blacks" following Jackson's name quite clearly show to which group of inmates of the stockade the visitor's attention was paid."

It would be escaped slaves, who, according to storms would contribute the final piece to the Jackson Whites' ancestral puzzle.

"The Dutch settlers kept these bondsmen as servants principally, and the bondage was not particularly hard in most cases. Still, it frequently happened that these escaped slaves would seek their own freedom, and the most accessible place and most secure was the fastness of the Ramapos...These people carried with them names of former masters, white acquaintances, or those that they had adopted. Thus we sometimes find family names among them that are borne by prominent and socially acceptable white persons."

How much of Storms' account of the Ramapo Mountain People's origins is historically accurate, and how much was merely transcribed from oral folk tales of the Jackson Whites is unclear. It is certain, however, that his "evidence" influenced people's perceptions of the Ramapos' residents and tainted many supposedly scholarly works that would follow. As if it was not damaging enough that the stereotypes, propagated by the various "authoritative" studies, had permeated the public's consciousness, subsequent literary references to the Jackson Whites actually reinforced the mythology. The famous canine story writer, Albert Payson Terhune of Pompton Lakes, vilified his mountain dwelling neighbors in his 1925 book, *Treasure*. And in his epic 1947 poem, 'Paterson,' William Carlos Williams concocted his own version of the Jackson Whites legacy, drawing obvious inspiration from the Storms history.

"Violence broke out in Tennessee, a massacre by the Indians, hangings and exile...The Tuscaroras, forced to leave their country, were invited by the Six Nations to join them in Upper New York. The bucks went on ahead but some of the women and the stragglers got no further than the valley-cleft near Suffern. They took to the mountains there where they were joined by Hessian deserters from the British Army, a number of albinos among them, escaped Negro slaves and a lot of women and their brats released in New York City after the British had been forced to leave. They had them in a pen there – picked up in Liverpool and elsewhere by a man named Jackson under contract with the British Government to provide women for the soldiers in America.

The mixture ran in the woods and took the general name, Jackson's Whites. (There had been some blacks, also, mixed in, some West Indian negresses, a ship-load, to replace the whites lost when their ship, one of six coming from England, had foundered in a storm at sea...)"

In the end there is not much historical evidence to support any of these versions of the Jackson Whites' legend. The Ramapo Mountain People themselves will tell you a variety of stories to explain their own ancestry, intertwining elements of the Dutch, Hessian, and Tuscarora Indian sagas into their own legacy. How much of these peoples' accounts of their history has been passed down from their forebearers, and how much has been tainted by the repeated publication of various texts on the subject is unknown. Most insist that they are really a tribe of Indians called the Ramapough. Though they bare little physical resemblance to Native Americans (most appear to be light-skinned African-Americans), they have been petitioning the Federal Government for 20 years to be recognized as a legitimate American Indian tribe. They have been recognized by the state governments of New Jersey and New York as such, but the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs has denied their petitions.

Such recognition is considered crucial because it brings certain Federal benefits, such as housing and health care assistance and the right to operate a casino. According to the Bureau though, the Ramapoughs are not a tribe at all, but rather descendants of settlers with African and Dutch blood who moved to the area from Manhattan in search of farmland beginning in the late 1600's.

The Bureau asserts that they have failed to show that they are descendants of a historic Indian tribe and cannot prove that they have led a continuous existence as a separate band

of people since the time of their first contact with Europeans.

It is almost certain that the legends of the Jackson Whites were originally started by the white neighbors of the Ramapos to stereotype the mountain people in a derogatory fashion. While their Ramapough show a fierce pride in their unique identity you would be hard pressed to find a person in Mahwah, Ringwood, or Hewitt that would call him or herself a Jackson Whites. "Those people," it would seem, are always to be found just over the next mountain.

After our original article concerning the Jackson Whites' legend was published we received a lot of mail in regard to the piece. Many of the letters sounded quite angry, as though we were in some way responsible for the existence of the legends, rather than merely their documentarians. Some of the mail was actually threatening, as many residents of the region seemed to have a difficult time separating the defamatory reputation of the Jackson Whites, from the historical legacy of the Ramapough Indians. The following letters from our readers may help illustrate how people in the Ramapo Mountains see themselves, and how they are perceived by others today.

From a Friend of the Jackson Whites

You may hear a lot of legends but if you were to meet some of these people they'd share their food and drink and they'd make you part of a friendship, which is deep and will always be there for you. They don't take you and make you disappear deep in the woods. They're not kidnappers. They don't rape or kill people.

Their men are tall, big and strong. They provide for their families and the women love their children. The kids grow up together and it's a shame because of all this kind of publicity they get cornered out. They don't belong. That's how they grow and feel about the outside world. You probably work with one and don't even know it. All they are are mixed breeds just like us. None of us are really American. At least they have the American Indian blood in their veins despite how it got there.

I know because I date a Jackson White. My boyfriend worked for nine years in the same place. Takes care of my two girls which was from my previous ex and expects nothing back. He's never hit or yelled at me for anything in the past 5 years. He's honest and trust worthy and doesn't go out cheating and is always home helping with cooking, cleaning, etc. And I'm NOT MISSING in the woods. This man can fix, build, paint, figure out anything and shouldn't be hurt over an article subjecting Jackson Whites as ghouls.

I'll take you to meet them any day and bring your cameras. You'll find they are proud people. May not have a lot of money, but they have electric, cable, water, phones, etc. You should also see the Christmas lights at Christmas time. Does this sound like a bunch of Hillbillies hiding out in the woods to you? –*A Friend and Family Member of the Jackson Whites*

As Normal As You Are

How do people get the idea that the people of the Ramapo Mountains were murderers? These people were not murderers and they are normal like you and me. I am a science

major at Stanford. I have studied things about New Jersey since I was a child. The name came about when back in the 1800's slaves that were shipped here for slavery and were raped by their "masters." These people were not inbred. The name Jackson came about when the man who had started it all whose last name was Jackson. These did not result in people being mentally retarded or any abnormalities. You can read all the books and articles you want but I think I would know more about them because I am a Ramapo Mountain Indian and I am as normal as you are. –*Evelyn*

Those Beautiful Mountain People

Growing up in Suffern and having spent much time in nearby Mahwah, my own observation of the so-called "Jackson Whites" is that they are a very peaceful and beautiful people, but living without many modern amenities. Of course, their community had its share of alcohol and fighting incidents, but the percentage of these incidents (compared to their numbers) never seemed particularly notable. I do remember that many of the Jackson White women were very beautiful, with slender and yet very strong bodies, strong straight shoulders, incredible slate-grey eyes which could stop you in your tracks, and a beautiful light tan skin color.

Simply due to the very different lifestyles, and to the wide difference in income level between the two groups, there was some residual animosity and fear toward the Jackson Whites from the recently-emigrated "suburban dwellers" in Mahwah, Ramsey and Suffern. This fear created some hostile folklore about the Jackson Whites, much of it untrue. –*Vinny*

Defending the Jackson Whites (?)

I went to school with these people. They work for the Wanaque Reservoir, drive our school buses, were our lunch aids in our elementary schools, and are overall a big part of our community. Granted they are their own people. If you don't bother them, they aren't gonna bother you. How would all of you people like it if your home and family were known as freaks of nature? All of their lives they were looked at as dangerous or made fun of for poverty or inbreeding.

A couple of interesting facts I learned from talking to my Jackson-White schoolmate in high school was that they do in fact inbreed, or have done so in the past, but usually only with cousins. Also the police only go up there if someone is dead because they will be attacked under other conditions.

Most of them never finish high school, but two out of the five with whom I grew up, and who were in my grade, finished high school and one of those two is now in college! The women are the people who usually don't finish high school, and it's usually because they get pregnant.

Anyway, it has really bothered me to hear that people are traveling up there and bothering them. I mean they're human too. Oh, and about that electricity, they have phones and cable. Which is more than I have. I have a phone and electricity, but no cable! –*Liz from Caldwell College*



Ramapo Sign

A Brief History of the Ramapoughs, by the Ramapoughs

By Dan DalCais, MSW, LSW Director, US Title IX, Indian Education Program

In 1709, the Tappan-Hackensacks Indians were unified under one chieftaincy in the Ramapo Mountains. They would remain hidden in the roughest, and to the settlers, the least desirable part of their homeland.

The Tappan-Hackensacks are today called Ramapough Mountain Indians. They are of the northern branch of Lenape or Delaware Indians. This northern branch is known today as Munsee Delawares.

The truth is, their community survived because their poverty and isolation protected them from intruders. Outsiders learned little about them. That's the way it had to be.

The fact is, there is so much historical documentation supporting the Native American heritage of this community that it requires dozens of pages to present a fair review. Another fact is that the vast majority of the public are totally unaware of this. There are many reasons why this is so. One reason is that the decades of denigrating, slandering and mocking these people are not easily overcome. It continues today. It seems there are those who just can't let go of the notion that this group is fair game for all sorts of vicious gossip.

Also, overwhelming political pressure has been brought to bear against the Ramapough Mountain Indians' quest for recognition. The Atlantic City gambling industry sees a recognized tribe in New Jersey as a threat to their monopoly. They have invested considerable effort to insure that the Ramapoughs never get a fair hearing. The public's ignorance of and prejudice against this community have been skillfully exploited. Prejudices and now politics have prevented the truth from being widely known.

Like most Indians they struggle to find a balance between developing their long suppressed identity and making a living in the modern world. All of them are human beings who deserve the same respect as the rest of us. I feel honored to work amongst and be friends with quite a few Ramapough Indians. There are still many Van Dunks, DeFreeses, Manns and DeGroots living in their ancestral mountain homeland. A few even have those blue "Dutchman's eyes."

This Internet story is only an excerpt of the information we have published on this subject. For the full story we suggest you refer to past issues of Weird NJ Magazine or our BOOK. If your local book seller, newsstand or convenience store doesn't carry Weird NJ, just tell them to call us toll free at 1-866-WEIRDNJ and we'll be happy to stock your favorite store for you. Purchase our special issue "Tales From Clinton Road."

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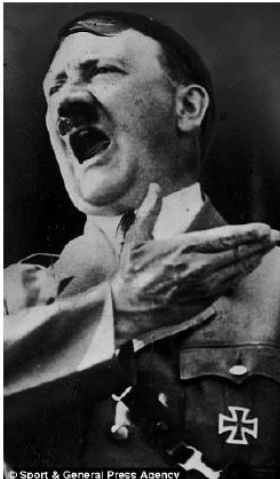
Hitler's secret addiction to crystal meth:

16:06 EST, 11 October 2014

dailymail.co.uk

Hitler's secret addiction to crystal meth: The Fuhrer took 'Breaking Bad' drug before ranting at Mussolini... and in his last days in the bunker

- **A 47-page dossier compiled by American Military Intelligence claims Hitler took 74 different medications including crystal meth-amphetamines**
- **He was not a pervert nor homosexual and his sexual organs showed no indication of abnormality.**
- **The Second World War ditty was wrong - Hitler was not monorchid**



The Fuhrer is believed to have taken crystal meth before a meeting with Mussolini in the summer of 1943, when he ranted non-stop for two hours

Adolf Hitler was a regular user of crystal meth – one of the most feared and addictive illegal substances on today's black market and the drug at the heart of the hit TV series *Breaking Bad* – research has shown.

A 47-page wartime dossier compiled by American Military Intelligence reveals that Hitler, a notorious hypochondriac, took an astonishing 74 different medications including crystal methamphetamines.

Manufactured by the fictional teacher-turned-drug dealer Walter White in *Breaking Bad*, the drug is prized by addicts for the feelings of euphoria it produces. But it was also valued by the military during the war as a drug which could help combat the effects of fatigue.

The Fuhrer is believed to have taken crystal meth before a meeting with Mussolini in the summer of 1943, when he ranted non-stop for two hours. And he had nine injections of a drug called Vitamultin, which contained meth-amphetamine, during his final days in his bunker.

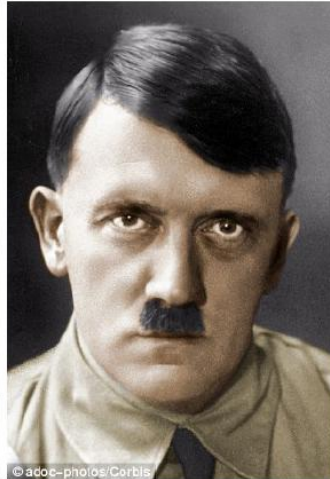
The dossier also debunks one of the most enduring legends about the Fuhrer – the claim that he lost a testicle when he was injured at the Battle of the Somme. Morale-boosting ditty 'Hitler has only got one ball' was popular during the Second World War and his admirer Unity Mitford suggested he 'lacked something in the manly department'.

But the American records, which feature in a Channel 4 documentary, show the dictator was not monorchid (the medical term for being born with one testicle). They also shoot down claims that Hitler was a predatory homosexual who massacred 150 supporters to hide his secret.

An entry written in November 1945, based on the Fuhrer's medical records and interviews with doctors who treated him, including his physician Dr Theodor Morell, states: 'He was neither a pervert nor a homosexual. His sexual organs showed no indication of abnormality.'

Manufactured by the fictional teacher-turned-drug dealer Walter White (played by Bryan Cranston, right) in Breaking Bad, the drug is prized by addicts for the feelings of euphoria it produces

Hitler fell under the spell of Dr Morell, who ran a clinic in Berlin, in 1936. He gave him medication called Mutaflor to cure stomach cramps, and Hitler became a devotee. Morell then prescribed the barbiturate Brom-Nervacit, the morphine-based drug Eukodal, bulls' semen, to give him a testosterone boost, and Pervitin, a pill containing crystal meth.



The Fuhrer (right) is believed to have taken crystal meth before a meeting with Mussolini (left) in the summer of 1943

Morell also gave him two artificial stimulants, Coramine and Cardiazol. To counteract the effect of the stimulants, Morell gave Hitler more sedatives. By the end of 1943, the Fuhrer was dependent on a destructive mix of uppers and downers.

Bill Panagopoulos, an American collector who discovered the dossier, said: 'Morell was a quack and a fraud and a snake oil salesman.'

'He should not have been practising medicine anywhere outside a veterinary clinic.'

He added: 'Some [of the drugs] were innocuous, some not so innocuous, some poisonous. Did he develop a dependence on any of these drugs? Which of these drugs, if any, were addictive? And did he become addicted to them? I'd be interested to know what the combination of these medications would do to someone who's otherwise in good health.'

- Hitler's Hidden Drug Habit is on Channel 4 at 8pm on October 19.

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Home Sells for \$100,000 More Because Buyers Get to Keep the Sellers' Family Cat

yahoo.com

By Mia Fitzharris October 16, 2014 3:36 PM Odd News

A cat in Australia is responsible for not only sealing the deal on the sale of her owners' home but upping the sale price, too. Tiffany the cat belonged to the Perceval family in Glen Iris, a suburb of Melbourne. During a recent home auction, Fran and Michael Perceval were happy to see a top bid of \$2,060,000 Australian, which is the equivalent of nearly \$1.8 million U.S. When broker Glen Coutinho began negotiations with the bidders, they made an unusual request: They offered to raise their bid by nearly \$140,000 Australian (\$100,000 U.S.) to \$1.9 million U.S. only if they could keep Tiffany.

It turns out the buyers' child had taken a liking to 4-year-old Tiffany during tours of the five-bedroom home. Earlier, "we jokingly said that all the people coming through are loving her," Fran Perceval recalled. "I said to the agent, 'She goes with the house, ha-ha.' Not expecting at all to actually have a clause written into the contract saying that includes with cat." Coutinho said he thought he had seen it all in his career: "I've had plenty of people say they would throw in their partners, but not pets, no. It's the first time." The buyers' 19-year-old son, who had picked out Tiffany in a pet shop, isn't taking the news so well. But his mom said, "We're thinking we'll put \$20,000 in a pile next to the cat and say to Sam, 'You choose'" (he's planning to travel overseas next year). This might be the first cat clause in real estate history.

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Historian dug up 150 graves to dress girls' corpses for parties

mirror.co.uk

A sick historian dug up 150 graves so he could dress the corpses of dozens of young girls for birthday parties.

Russian Anatoly Moskvina removed the bodies of girls aged between three and 12 to fulfill his twisted fantasies.

He then took them home and turned them into a grisly mummy collection, dressing the bodies and skeletons in stockings and dresses, and even making one look like a teddy bear.



Police

Horror Show: Anatoly Moskvina dug up bodies of 150 little girls so could dress them up for parties

Moskvina, who speaks 13 languages and was described by some as 'a genius', also gave the mummified corpses names and organised birthday parties for them.

A video made by Moskvina and found at his apartment by investigators showed a corridor cluttered with wedding dresses and bright, colourful clothes.

In a room the camera zoomed in on the faces of the girls' faces, wrapped in light beige fabric. His voice over on the video said: "These dolls are made of mummified human remains."



Police

Disturbing Find: The bodies were clothed in a range of outfits and then left around his home

Police said Moskvina also compiled up-to-date information about the lives of each girl he had dug up and printed off instructions on a computer for how to produce dolls out of human remains.

His macabre obsession was discovered when his parents visited him after returning from holiday.

The 46-year-old from the city of Nizhni Novgorod in central Russia was arrested in 2011, but it has now emerged he will not stand trial for his appalling crimes.

Chilling Obsession: Moskvina even dressed one of the bodies up as a teddy bear



Police

In a 2007 interview with the newspaper Nizhegorodsky Rabochy, or Nizhny Novgorod Worker, Moskvina said he had inspected 752 cemeteries, often traveling some 20 miles a day by foot to find them.

He said he drank from puddles, spent nights in haystacks or at abandoned farms and once even slept in a coffin readied for a funeral.

He said he was repeatedly questioned by police, who then always let him go.



Police Police Police CEN

Macabre Hobby: Moskvina compiled details of all the girl's lives, police say

Before he was finally arrested he wrote a piece for a publication on necrology to explain his interest in the dead.

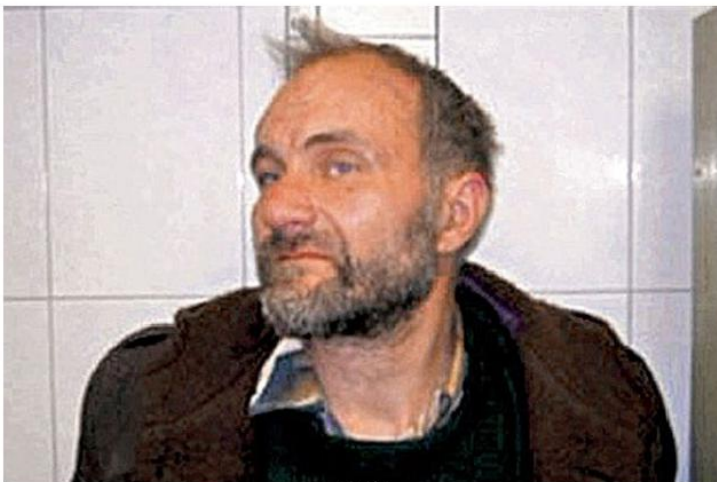
He said that when he was 12, he came across a funeral procession whose participants forced him to kiss the face of a dead 11-year-old girl. He said he later grew interested in the occult.

Mentally Unfit: Three years after he was arrested, authorities have decided he is not fit for trial

Three years after his arrest a judge has ruled that he is still not mentally fit enough to stand trial and should remain in a psychiatric clinic.

A prosecution spokesman said: "After three years of monitoring him in a psychiatric clinic it is absolutely clear that Moskvina is not mentally fit for trial.

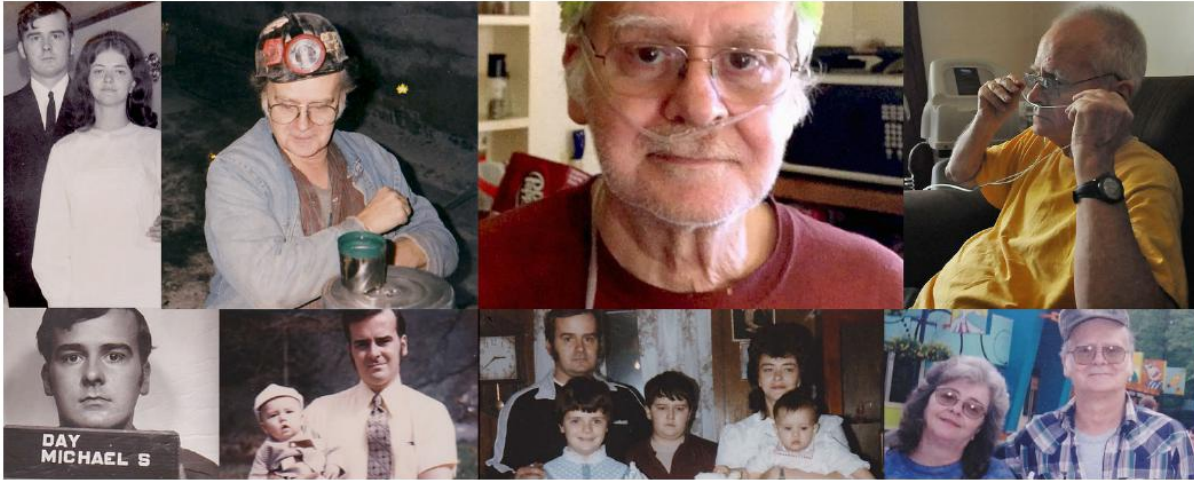
"He will therefore be kept for psychiatric



CEN

treatment at the clinic."

Courtesy of the Day Family, F. Brian Ferguson/Center for Public Integrity



LAST BREATH

When a coal miner's lungs finally gave out, his autopsy proved a top doctor was wrong — giving hope to thousands of other miners. The story of Steve Day and his final vindication.

Chris Hamby BuzzFeed Staff

Posted on Oct. 8, 2014, at 6:34 p.m.

After working underground in the coal mines of southern West Virginia for almost 35 years, Steve Day thought it was obvious why he gasped for air, slept upright in a recliner, and inhaled oxygen from a tank 24 hours a day.

More than half a dozen doctors who saw the masses in his lungs or the test results showing his severely impaired breathing were also in agreement.

The clear diagnosis was black lung.

Yet, when I met Steve in April 2013, he had lost his case to receive benefits guaranteed by federal law to any coal miner disabled by black lung. The coal company that employed the miner usually pays for these benefits, and, as almost always happens, Steve's longtime employer had fought vigorously to avoid paying him. As a result, he and his family were barely scraping by, sometimes resorting to loans from relatives or neighbors to make it through the month.

Like many other miners, he had lost primarily because of the opinions of a unit of doctors at the Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions that had long been the go-to place for coal companies seeking negative X-ray readings to help defeat a benefits claim. The longtime leader of the unit, Dr. Paul Wheeler, testified against Steve, and the judge determined that his opinion trumped all others, as judges have in many other cases.

Today, however, there is final and overwhelming evidence that Wheeler was wrong: Steve's

autopsy.

On July 26, what was left of Steve's lungs gave out. He was 67 years old. The doctor who performed the autopsy found extensive black lung. With the permission of Steve's family, I shared his autopsy report with three leading doctors who specialize in black lung and related diseases. Each said essentially the same thing: Steve had one of the most severe cases of black lung they had seen.

"A majority of his lungs had been replaced by scar tissue with coal dust," said Dr. Francis Green, a professor of medicine at the University of Calgary and one of the world's top experts on the pathology of black lung.

Dr. David Weissman, who heads a federal agency's division that certifies doctors — including Wheeler — to read chest X-rays, said it was "very concerning" that a certified reader would fail to recognize a case as severe as Steve's.

Reached by phone, Wheeler said, "I'd love to talk to you, but the hospital has asked that everything be referred to the legal team."

A Johns Hopkins spokesperson would not comment on Steve's case, but noted that the black lung X-ray-reading program headed by Wheeler has been suspended, pending an internal review. The spokesperson refused to provide details about the review, saying only that it "is proceeding as rapidly as possible, and I can assure you that Johns Hopkins takes it very seriously."

Eight months before he died, Steve filed a new claim for benefits, presenting evidence that the masses in his lungs had grown and his breathing had worsened even further. He underwent an exam by a doctor of the company's choosing, and even this physician found severe black lung.

Primary beneficiary	\$631.80
Primary beneficiary and one dependent	\$947.70
Primary beneficiary and two dependents	\$1,105.70
Primary beneficiary and three or more dependents	\$1,263.60

Miners who win their cases receive a monthly check paid, in a majority of cases, by their former employer. Here are the current rates set by the federal government. Department of Labor / Via.dol.gov

In late September, a Labor Department claims examiner issued an award of benefits. But this is only a first step in what is usually a protracted process of appeals. Indeed, Steve also had won at this initial level in 2005. The company that employed Steve, now a subsidiary of Patriot Coal Corp., appealed that decision, leading to the denial of the claim by a judge.

Patriot refused to say whether it would continue to fight Steve's current claim. "Patriot Coal follows set procedures in the handling of claims," a spokesperson said in a statement. "We will continue to follow our procedures and will respond accordingly."

I asked whether, given the overwhelming autopsy evidence, the company would be willing to concede that Steve had a legitimate claim for benefits. “We have procedures we follow in reviewing a claim, and we will follow these procedures with this claim, as with all others,” a spokesperson responded. She would not say what those procedures are.

Paul Frampton, an attorney at the firm Bowles Rice LLP, handles a large number of black lung cases on behalf of coal companies and defeated Steve’s previous claim. He is again representing Patriot Coal in the current claim. He did not respond to repeated voicemails and emails.

Steve became the face of a series of investigative stories I wrote last year while at the Center for Public Integrity; the series logo featured an image of him holding his hardhat with tubes feeding oxygen through his nostrils. He freely shared his story, granted me access to deeply personal records, and became a symbol of the struggles many other miners face.

Now his autopsy report and his personal story highlight how Wheeler’s approach to reading chest films, applied in thousands of cases over decades, led to wrongful denials — with devastating consequences.

It was 1969 when Michael Steve Day arrived back home in Glen Fork, West Virginia, after a tour in Vietnam, where he had worked base security for the Air Force. He returned amid tumult in the Appalachian coalfields.



Steve Day served in Vietnam, working base security for the U.S. Air Force. Courtesy of the Day family

A widespread strike had virtually shut down the coal industry in West Virginia, and tens of thousands of miners had descended on the state capitol in Charleston, demanding legislation to address a problem that had plagued miners for more than a century. It had gone by many names, but a movement had coalesced around a simple, descriptive term: black lung.

Later that year, Congress would make a promise to the nation’s miners: Coal companies would be required to control levels of disease-causing dust, an approach meant to virtually eradicate black lung, and anyone who did get it would receive fair compensation.

But at the time, Steve, 23, had romance on his mind. He met a girl named Nyoka Gayle Fortner. They spent afternoons taking walks, holding hands. They’d been together only weeks when Steve asked her to marry him.

“Aw, Steve, you can do better than me,” Nyoka recalled telling him. “No, I want you,” he said. They eloped on July 25, 1969.

Both Steve’s and Nyoka’s fathers had been coal miners. Nyoka had seen the physical toll of the job, and she asked Steve not to go underground. He said he wouldn’t.

But options are limited in southern West Virginia, and the lure of the best paycheck around soon hooked Steve. He went to work for Eastern Associated Coal in September 1969, and he would work the rest of his roughly 33-year mining career for this company that's now owned by Patriot Coal.

He did the dustiest jobs: cutting coal with powerful machinery, hauling it in shuttle cars, or driving bolts into the roof of a freshly mined area to ensure it didn't collapse. He'd work double shifts, extra days — whatever he could to earn more for his family.

Steve and Nyoka had three children: a son, Michael Steve Day Jr., and two daughters, Stepheny and Patience. "My dad would come in from the mines, and he'd still be dirty, coal dust all over him. And he would stop and play," Patience recalled. "I remember many a day when we would be out in the front yard, we would have ball gloves, and he would toss the baseball around with me."

Jobs came and went with the boom and bust of the coal industry. There'd be layoffs, and Steve would drive around day after day looking for work. And there were the inherent dangers of working in often-unstable caverns deep underground, surrounded by powerful equipment. Rocks slammed into Steve's back and bruised and split open the skin on his elbows and knuckles. He sometimes worked in tunnels so low that he had to crawl for entire shifts. He'd come home with knees like balloons. "He would work and work and work," Patience said, "and it was all for his family."

The more serious problem was less obvious. By the late 1990s, he began to notice coughing and labored breathing. In 2004, Steve's doctor told him to get out of the mines; his lungs were shot. The man Nyoka had always seen as indestructible, "a superman," had to retire.



courtesy of the Day Family

Steve's case, which he filed in 2005, grabbed my attention for a simple reason: The judge's 2011 decision denying benefits didn't seem to make much sense. Continuing to read through thousands of decisions, I came to realize that nonsensical conclusions are surprisingly common in the arcane world of federal black lung benefits.

When a miner files a claim, he is entitled to a medical exam conducted by a doctor approved by the Labor Department, but he also must submit to an exam by a doctor of the company's choosing.

Steve unwittingly selected a doctor who frequently testifies for coal companies to conduct his Labor Department-paid exam, but even this doctor found the most advanced form of black lung. The doctor chosen by the company also found black lung initially, but he changed his mind after being sent Wheeler's reports on the chest films.

A miner has to prove not only that he has black lung but also that it has rendered him totally disabled. In Steve's case, every doctor agreed his lung function was so bad that he was totally disabled, and every doctor except Wheeler and his two Johns Hopkins colleagues saw black lung on the X-rays and CT scans.

But the reports and testimony from the Johns Hopkins doctors were the ones that counted. Deferring especially to Wheeler's qualifications — multiple professional certifications, undergraduate and medical degrees from Harvard University, a long list of publications, four decades of teaching at a world-renowned institution — the judge found that Steve "did not have" black lung.

There was no evidence that Steve had any of the illnesses Wheeler suggested as alternatives — tuberculosis, bird tuberculosis, or a fungal infection caused by exposure to bird or bat droppings. The judge made no determination about what was causing Steve's obvious disability, just that it wasn't black lung.

Reading through other cases, I saw many instances of disabled miners who were being treated for black lung but who, according to judges who based their decisions in large part on the opinions of Wheeler and his colleagues, didn't have the disease or couldn't prove they had it. It was as if they had some mystery illness.



***Who was right and who was wrong:
See a comparison of what doctors
said about Steve Day's lungs —
and what the autopsy proved.***

In reading Steve's X-rays and CT scans, all of the doctors more or less agreed about the white splotches they saw; the main difference was how they interpreted them. But the most definitive way to determine if someone had black lung is not to analyze shadows on film but to examine the lungs themselves in an autopsy.

Steve's diseased lungs, then, provide a useful test of who was right and who was wrong.

Of the reports by doctors who saw black lung on the images of Steve's chest before his

death, perhaps the most detailed was by Dr. John E. Parker, who, for the last decade, has been chief of pulmonary and critical care medicine at the West Virginia University School of Medicine and, before that, ran the X-ray-reading program at the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), which licenses physicians such as Wheeler to examine films for black lung and similar diseases. Parker teaches doctors to read X-rays on behalf of NIOSH and the American College of Radiology.

In 2013, I asked him to review Steve's X-rays and CT scans, telling him only Steve's name, age, and mining experience, as well as the fact that the interpretation of the films was contested. With the exception of one CT scan, Parker evaluated all the films Wheeler reviewed, as well as some taken more recently. Considering only the earlier films — those also evaluated by Wheeler — his conclusion was clear: Even back then, Steve already had end-stage black lung.

"Mr. Day's history and findings are so characteristic that I am confident that Mr. Day has lung disease related to his coal mining," Parker wrote in his report. "I am so confident, that I am indeed certain a biopsy or an autopsy, if performed, would confirm my diagnosis."

Wheeler, by contrast, had been asked during a deposition in 2009 whether the spots he saw were black lung. "They're not," he testified.

How did Wheeler arrive at this conclusion? He has a strict set of criteria that he applies when reading films. Yet medical literature contradicts some of his opinions, and Steve's autopsy report supports these texts and the reports of Parker and the other physicians who saw black lung.

For example, evaluating a 2005 CT scan, Wheeler noted areas of dead tissue inside the masses in Steve's lungs and said these are typical of an infectious disease but not black lung. This film was not available for Parker to review, but, in later CT scans, he also saw areas of dead tissue. Consistent with medical literature, Parker said that they could be characteristic of severe black lung. As the disease progresses, areas of lung tissue inside masses can die, become liquid, and sometimes rupture into the airway, causing miners to cough up black phlegm. This matches what Steve and Nyoka described experiencing, and the doctor who performed the autopsy confirmed that this is what was happening in Steve's lungs.

This pattern recurs in the reports. Wheeler and Parker saw essentially the same things. They more or less agreed on characteristics such as the location of the masses and the prevalence of smaller background spots. Yet Wheeler said these things pointed to tuberculosis or a fungal infection, while Parker said they pointed to black lung. The autopsy report shows that Parker was right and Wheeler was wrong.

The criteria Wheeler applied in Steve's case didn't just contradict Parker and other doctors. Many of the standards Wheeler used when reading films are at odds with the definitive text, written by an expert panel of the College of American Pathologists and still in use today, on the appearance of black lung.

Nonetheless, Wheeler has used these criteria in countless other cases. He has recited them in report after report, deposition after deposition. In a system with few attorneys willing to represent miners — and even fewer who know enough to challenge Wheeler's views — his assertions have carried great weight and contributed to many miners being denied black lung benefits.

In more than 1,500 cases decided since 2000, Wheeler has not found a single case of the most severe form of black lung, even as other doctors saw the advanced form of the disease in 390 of these cases. Overall during that time, which is as far back as digital records go, miners have lost more than 800 cases after other doctors saw black lung on an X-ray but Wheeler graded the film as negative.

And that's only counting the cases that made it to the second stage in the claims process — a hearing before an administrative law judge — and not cases that were denied at the initial level. Decisions at that early stage are not publicly available. The Labor Department recently contacted more than 1,000 miners who have filed claims since 2001 and were denied after negative readings by Wheeler, informing them that they could seek to reopen their claims or file new ones.

Wheeler has been reading X-rays for black lung for at least 40 years.

For hours one afternoon in April 2013, Steve and Nyoka sat side by side on the couch in their living room, describing to me the torturous routines that consumed their daily lives.

Steve spent most of his day in a recliner next to his oxygen machine. Most physical activity was out of the question. So was lying down to sleep; if he tried, he'd start to feel suffocated. Every night, Nyoka would sleep lightly in the bedroom nearby, listening to Steve's breathing. Often, she would hear him gasp or seem to stop breathing altogether. She'd jump out of bed and beat his back until he coughed something up.

Nyoka struggled with debilitating pain from rheumatoid arthritis. Another disease that caused her body to retain too much iron sapped her strength. Also living in the four-bedroom, one-bathroom home with them were Stepheny, Patience, and Patience's husband and two children.

As we talked that day, Nyoka's words rose in a crescendo over the steady hiss of Steve's oxygen machine.

"They spent my husband's life and now don't want to give him a penny for it and don't care anything about the family that will be left behind," she said, tears streaming down her cheek.

Steve's expression never changed, and he said nothing. He just reached out a hand and clasped hers.

"To explain Steve is almost impossible," Nyoka said recently. He was proud of his military service, but, unlike many people in the area, he never liked hunting — couldn't bring himself to kill an animal. He rarely said much, but, if you pushed the right buttons, he'd become an

engaging storyteller. He loved Chevy trucks and brooked no criticism of them, and he doted on a small gray cat, petting her as she purred or slept in his lap. "It was a little precious relationship that they had," Patience, 30, said recently, laughing.

He adored Patience's two sons. The first, Eli, now 2, was his "Little Buddy." The second, Demetrius, now 7 months old, became "Tiny Buddy." Eli still sees his grandfather in household items. Recently, Patience was stocking the refrigerator with Dr. Pepper, the only soda Steve ever drank (and the one thing he asked for when I visited him in the hospital recently). Eli appeared. "Paw Paw?" he asked.

As Steve pursued his new claim this year, his breathing continued to deteriorate. This July, he ended up in the hospital because of a gallbladder infection. Surgery to remove the organ was a success, but, after coming out of anesthesia, Steve had trouble breathing. For weeks, his family's hopes rose and fell with a draining series of improvements and setbacks.

July 25 arrived — Steve and Nyoka's 45th wedding anniversary. For weeks, Nyoka's rheumatoid arthritis had been so bad that she barely could get out of bed, so she gave Patience a long note to read to Steve.

"She wanted me to wish him a happy anniversary, said that she loved him, she missed him terribly, and that, if her body would have let her, she would have been there," Patience recalled.

Steve's eyes were closed, and the bed shook as he fought for each breath. "I was sitting beside the bed in a chair, and I had my arm up on the bedrail and my head bowed," Patience said. His breathing was so labored, she said, that "my upper body was being shaken."

Steve died the next day.



Steve's funeral was held August 1 in Oceana, West Virginia. Chris Hamby/BuzzFeed

At his funeral, an American flag lay across his coffin, and a collage of pictures told the story of a military man, coal miner, and proud husband, father, and grandfather.

There are many things about Steve I'll always remember, perhaps most of all a conversation we had last November.

It was a Friday evening, two days after the story featuring Steve had come out, and Johns Hopkins had just announced that it was suspending its black lung X-ray-reading program that Wheeler headed.

I called Steve and told him. He let out a hoot of elation unlike anything I'd heard from him

before. He gathered his family around the phone. As I gave details, he excitedly relayed them.

Within minutes, though, his restrained tone returned. He asked, "I guess maybe I helped some people?"

Tagged: black lung, coal, coal mining, johns hopkins, patriot coal

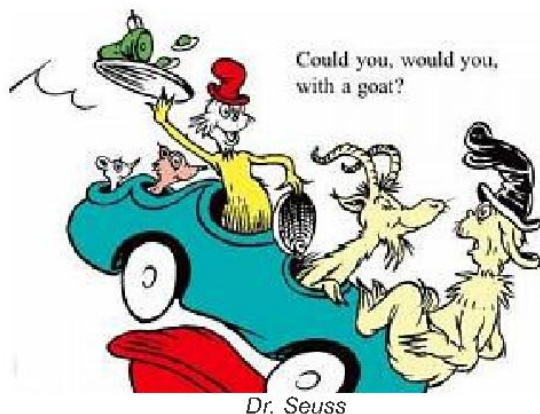
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I think I accidentally started an urban legend. My bad.

Jesse Walker | Oct. 8, 2014 11:18 am

reason.com

I think I accidentally started an urban legend. My bad.



During Banned Books Week last month, you may have heard that some busybodies banned *Green Eggs and Ham* because they thought the story was kinda gay. *Metro* reported that this happened "briefly in the 1990s because of supposed homosexual innuendos." A Minnesota radio station said the book was targeted for its "homosexual theme." *Feministe* announced that it had been challenged in California for, "No shit, 'homosexual seduction' on the part of Sam." Many other outlets have related the same story, not just

last month but in years past. In 2013, Dr. Seuss' classic even made its way into the Oberlin Public Library's banned books display. "Inside the bright orange book," a local paper reported, a "slip explains that it was once thought to have 'homosexual seduction,' because Sam tried to seduce his friend."

None of these reports say where or when this purported prohibition took place, other than those vague references to California and the '90s. A Lexis-Nexis search turned up nothing. I asked the American Library Association, which sponsors Banned Books Week and keeps track of such things, if they were aware of such an effort; they told me it wasn't in their database. *Metro* said it got its info from a book called *Seuss Facts*, which as far as I can tell does not exist—though a Facebook feed by that name did mention the alleged ban without citing a source. I got in touch with some of the other reporters and bloggers who had repeated the story. None of them were certain where it came from. After I contacted *BuzzFeed*'s Spencer Althouse, who included *Green Eggs* in a banned-books list last year, he concluded that the story was "a terrible, terrible rumor" and added a correction to his article. I'm open to the possibility that there's a real event here that I haven't been able to track down, but that seems extremely doubtful.

Besides, I'm pretty sure I know where this began. It's my fault. Sorry. My bad.

Way back in 2002, I wrote a satiric Banned Books Week column that mocked the nation's prigs by suggesting they try to pull something *new* off the nation's school shelves. The article then devolved into me decoding the supposed sexual subtexts in *Treasure Island* and, yes, *Green Eggs and Ham*. Dr. Seuss' book, I wrote,

is a thinly disguised account of homosexual seduction. In this kiddie favorite, "Sam I Am" (that is, "Same As I Am") tries to persuade the narrator to "eat" green eggs and ham. Anyone who has traveled in the Spanish-speaking world knows what "eggs" are. The ham, of course, is a long, phallic sausage, perfect for "porking" someone. The protagonist repeatedly denies any interest in the offer, but Sam

persists, proposing that he join him in any number of locations, positions, and kinky arrangements. ("Would you, could you, on a boat? Would you, could you, with a goat?") Finally, our hero gives in, just once—and discovers that he enjoys fellating breakfast after all. Sam has made a convert, and the legion of God-Fearing Heterosexuals is diminished by one.

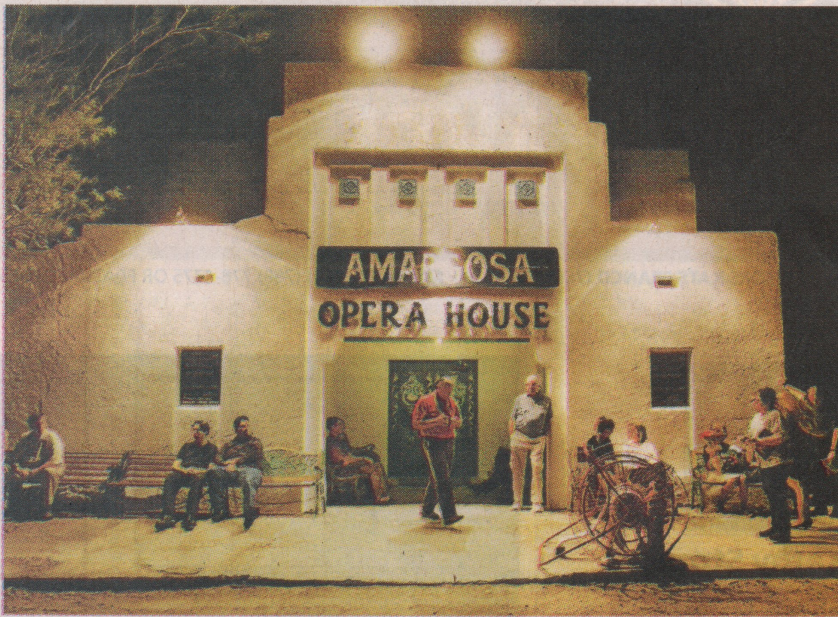
When I first read that *Green Eggs* had been banned somewhere, I worried that some literal-minded puritan had taken me seriously and launched a crusade. That doesn't seem to have happened. But phrases from my piece have turned up in several accounts of the legendary *Green Eggs* ban, and one article actually links to my old column to back up its claims, apparently unaware that I was making a joke. It's true that I never claimed that this ban actually happened anywhere, so those references to California and the '90s didn't come from me. But *The Lorax*, another Seuss book, really has faced parental opposition in California; and an alleged *Green Eggs* ban in China reportedly ended in 1991. Both of those factlets were mentioned in some of the same articles that claimed a gay-hating Grundy had tried to keep kids from reading *Green Eggs and Ham*. I suspect that at some point in the chain of transmission, those different elements got mixed up.

Someone once said that if a spooky legend catches on, it says something true about the anxieties of the people who believe and repeat the tale, even if it says absolutely nothing true about the subject of the story itself. My yarn may be more funny than scary—that's what I was aiming for, anyway—but the idea that people would prohibit a harmless children's book is still pretty frightening. And it's not hard to imagine what underlying worries might be at work here.

Many educated elites live in fear of Bible-thumping troglodytes haunting the hinterlands, some great redneck beast slouching towards Washington to make Sarah Palin president. Book-banning stories are tailor made to fit that terror. Palin herself had to deal with rumors in 2008 that she had tried to fire a librarian who wouldn't remove reams of offensive texts from the shelves. *The Guardian* once ran an Amanda Marcotte editorial under the headline "The Tea Party moves to ban books." The editorial contained exactly zero examples of Tea Partiers trying to ban anything.

There really are crusaders out there whose fear of demons leads them to try to suppress speech. Just ask the American Library Association. But there are also people whose fear of demons leads them to imagine book bonfires where none exist.

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AP

Patrons wait for the doors to open at the Amargosa Opera House in Death Valley Junction. The town once thrived while a local borax mine and railroad were still in operation. By the late 1920s, the town was little more than a tourist stop on the way to the park. Today most of the buildings are gone but the town remains a draw thanks to a hotel and the restored opera house.

Golf Cart Parade celebrates 50th birthday

Oct. 26 event
in Palm Desert
evolved since '64

Denise Goolsby
The Desert Sun

When the 50th annual Palm Desert Golf Cart Parade steps off on El Paseo on the afternoon of Oct. 26, participants and spectators should expect temperatures to fall in the 80-degree range, if historical averages hold true.

Back in the early days, when the parade was held in July, attendees sweltered during the peak of summer, when temps could climb into the 100-teens and higher.

"The parade started 50 years ago with some local homeowners who had nothing to do in July," said Mike Hardin, owner of The Lock Doctor and chairman of the golf cart parade committee.

The parade used to travel on the frontage road, paralleling Highway 111, past Keedy's Fountain Grill, the old Palm Desert Rexall Drugs and other businesses along the street. Only about eight or 10 carts cruised the parade route in the early days.

"It evolved over the years and eventually turned into 'Christmas in July,'" Hardin said.

An early photo provided by the Historical Society of Palm Desert shows a golf cart decorated like a snowman.

The parade, presented by the Auen Foundation and sponsored by the city of Palm Desert and the Palm Desert Area Chamber of Commerce, has settled into an early fall time slot, and now travels through the heart of El Paseo and features



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PALM DESERT

The Palm Desert Golf Cart Parade began in the 1960s in the July heat. Now it enjoys the comfort of October.



All lined up for an early-era Palm Desert Golf Cart Parade.

around 100 parade entries.

Members of the USC Trojan Marching Band will make their debut at this year's parade, ac-

companied by Trojan mascot Traveler the horse.

This year's theme is "Palm Desert on Parade — Through

"The parade started 50 years ago with some local homeowners who had nothing to do in July."

MIKE HARDIN, chairman
of the Golf Cart Parade committee

the Decades: '60s, '70s, '80s and Present Day."

The event has all the pomp and circumstance of a typical parade—including local school bands and military color guard—but it also serves the needs of the business community by giving owners an inexpensive platform to showcase themselves.

"It's excellent advertising," Hardin said. "Where else can your business name be seen by 20,000 people sitting on the street—for \$160."

The Auen Foundation is providing free seating and lunch for 350 seniors—some transported from assisted living homes. There's a VIP section—seating and lunch can be purchased for \$25 or \$30—and a Kid's Play Zone sponsored by the Webb Foundation.

"It's a great community event," said parade manager Katie Stice, the chamber's vice president of membership services. "It's a kick-off to the season... it brings everybody together. It's definitely by the community, for the community."

This year's Grand Marshal will be longtime Palm Desert Councilwoman and six-time Mayor Jean M. Benson.

Benson, who is not seeking re-election in November, is being honored for her 30-plus years of service to the city.

"As a local resident since 1969 and a member of Palm Desert's first City Council, I have enjoyed viewing and participating in our Golf Cart Parade for decades, watching as it evolved from a small local event into a unique event enjoyed by so many today," Benson said. "This long history makes it even more of an honor to serve as the parade's grand marshal as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of this colorful and fun family favorite."

The festivities begin at 8 a.m. with a Palm Desert Rotary Club pancake breakfast in the Bank of America parking lot. And at 10 a.m., sponsor booths and golf booths, vendor booths and Kids Fun Zone opens. At 1 p.m., the parade steps off at San Luis Rey and travels west on El Paseo to Ocotillo.

The parade debuted in 1961, but wasn't held annually until 1964.

For more information, visit golfcartparade.com

In 1860 six murderers nearly wiped out the Wiyot Indian tribe -- in 2004 its members have found ways to heal

William S. Kowinski, Special to The Chronicle
Published 4:00 am, Saturday, February 28, 2004

sfgate.com



Activist, folk singer, speaker, and actor Floyd Redcrow Westerman performs at the Wiyot Sacred Site Fund Benefit Concert on Feb. 7, 2004, in Eureka, Calif. He appeared in "Dances With Wolves" and numerous other films and television shows. Photo: Shaun Walker

Just before dusk, several hundred people are expected to gather, as they have on the last Saturday of February for 13 years, at the edge of Humboldt Bay in Eureka, across from a small, tear-shaped island half a mile away.

Standing under a deepening blue sky flared with reds at the horizon (as they did last year) or under umbrellas in a North Coast late winter rain (as they did the year before), they will hold candles and share songs and prayers.

The forested land they can see across the bay, still called Indian Island, was the scene of one of the most notorious massacres in California history. At least 60 and perhaps more than 200 women, children and elders of the Wiyot tribe were slaughtered with axes and knives by six white men,

known to be landowners and businessmen.



• **THE NORTH COAST: A Kayak Adventure / GOING HOME AGAIN /** On a sacred island in Humboldt Bay, descendants of the Wiyots -- an Indian tribe nearly wiped out by massacres in the 1800s -- forge a future from the remnants of that tragic past [related_link|article-2607689|article-2816476|1](#)

This was one of three simultaneous attacks at different locations that sent the small tribe spiraling toward extinction 144 years ago.

For a long time, it seemed they were extinct.

But the Wiyot tribe, denied federal recognition in 1953, regained it in 1990, and moved to a new reservation at Table Bluff, south of Eureka's city center, where 450 tribal members now live.

"We are still here," said Cheryl Seidner, the Wiyot tribal chairwoman since 1996 and a direct descendant of an infant survivor of the Indian Island massacre. "We are still a people. We still cast a shadow, we are not gone."

Grim recapitulation

By a quirk of the California coastline, Eureka is the westernmost city in the 48 contiguous United States. Through the fate of history, it was one of the last places in America where Indians and European Americans confronted each other. In a sense, it recapitulated and condensed several hundred years of American history in a few decades.

In 1860, California had been a state for only a decade, and the city of Eureka, growing from its docks to push against the redwood forests around it, had been the seat of the newly formed Humboldt County for just four years. The Humboldt Bay communities of Eureka and Arcata began by supplying the gold miners prowling the northeastern mountains, but by 1860 had opened nine timber mills and were busily engaged in agriculture and shipbuilding. In 1853 alone, 143 ships left the bay loaded with timber, bound for San Francisco and other ports.

But far northern California had many small tribal groups of Indians living in its forests and mountains and along its rivers and coast, some for 10,000 years.

The village of Tuluwat on Indian Island was the physical and spiritual center of the Wiyot world, which was made up of 20 villages spread over 40 square miles, with a population of perhaps 3,000. There is evidence of Wiyot presence on the island for at least 1,000 years. But for many white settlers, Indians were a not-quite-human barrier to progress. Local newspapers supported a policy of extermination.

On the last Saturday in February 1860, the Wiyot completed their weeklong world renewal ceremony at Tuluwat, to bring the world back into balance and mark the equivalent of their new year. The small boat arrived late that night, while the Wiyot men were away gathering supplies.

The massacre on Indian Island was not the first in the region, nor would it be the last. It was part of an accelerated pattern of destruction, beginning with random killings and rapes by miners and ranchers, and including kidnapping and legal slavery of mostly women and children under California's 1850 Indian indenture law. Later, Indians were forced into forts and small reservations under concentration camp conditions, and finally, those still living on their lands were subject to organized warfare by local militia while federal troops fought the Civil War. Together with the ravages of disease, an estimated 15 local tribes were reduced to five.

But Indian Island became the most infamous massacre in Northern California probably because of Bret Harte, who before achieving literary fame reported for a newspaper in Arcata. His account of the massacre and his editorial condemning its cruelty made him a local outcast, but anonymous letters to a San Francisco newspaper rumored to be his work were largely responsible for the national knowledge of this event. Editorial writers in San Francisco and in New York began referring to Eureka as Murderville.

Though the names of those responsible for the Indian Island massacre were apparently widely known, no legal action was ever taken against them. As Eureka became a prosperous commercial center, and Humboldt Bay became the busiest port between Seattle and San

Francisco, this part of the past seemed better left forgotten.

But unlike in much of California, the Indian populations indigenous to the Humboldt County area remained significant. Besides those on Yurok, Hupa, Karuk and Wiyot lands and several rancherias of mixed tribal groups, many enrolled members of indigenous tribes live and work in Humboldt's cities and towns. Though less than 6 percent of Humboldt's population, Indians are its largest minority group. A bare majority of the county's population lives in communities surrounding Humboldt Bay, on land that once belonged to the Wiyot.

"The past is not dead," as William Faulkner wrote. "It's not even past."

A story that needed telling

Seidner and her sister, Leona Wilkinson, began the vigils in 1992, together with two non-Indians, Peggy Betsels, former pastor of Eureka's United Church of Christ, and Marylee Rohde, former president of the Humboldt County Historical Society.

"I've known about the story of the massacre since I was a little girl," Rohde said, "so I hadn't realized how deeply it was buried in Eureka's psyche. Peggy didn't hear of it until her daughter was in school, from the Native American parent of another student. But in talking with Cheryl and Leona, we realized that the story needs to be told. There needs to be healing, but the wound tends to fester if it's been suppressed."

"It's a healing of two communities," Seidner said. "It's not just us or them. We need to come together as a community of learning, to understand each other. That rip in our society needs to be mended, and hopefully we've been trying to do that for the last 13 years."

Community awareness of the Wiyot story increased dramatically in the late 1990s when Seidner began to raise money for the purchase of the 1.5 acres of Indian Island where the world renewal ceremonies had traditionally taken place. At the vigil in 2000, Seidner announced that as a result of many small contributions from the local community, together with donations from Indian organizations and individuals nationally, the tribe had reacquired this land. The Wiyot would return to Tuluwat.

More money is needed to clear the site of debris left behind by an abandoned shipyard, to erect the new ceremonial building and perhaps acquire more of Indian Island. The Wiyot Sacred Sites Fund continues to raise money, partly through events such as the third annual benefit concert earlier this month. One source of continuing support has come from local churches that recognize a special responsibility.

An anonymous letter about the massacre thought to be from Bret Harte was sent in 1860 to the San Francisco Bulletin asserting: "The pulpit is silent, and the preachers say not a word."

"They did nothing, they said nothing," said Clay Ford, current pastor of the Arcata First Baptist Church. "We realized that we needed to take responsibility before God and before the Wiyots for what Christian people did not do, even if we weren't there." After making a formal proclamation of repentance, Ford handed Seidner the first of annual checks on behalf of the

Humboldt Evangelical Alliance.

Another group, the Humboldt Interfaith Council, is dedicating its community fund-raising efforts this year to the Wiyot Sacred Sites Fund, including the proceeds from its Interreligious Peace Festival, being held on the Humboldt State University campus today. It will emphasize the sacred arts -- "especially dance and music," said Ross Connors-Keith, the group's director, "in keeping with the Wiyots' world renewal ceremony, which involved dance and singing. We thought this would be a wonderful way of bringing the community together."

But Rohde believes there's still progress to be made. "It's been a disappointment to me that I haven't seen more of the white population of Eureka interested in the vigil," she says. "But we have seen participation increase over the years from the Wiyots and other Native Americans. When I look back at the civil rights movement, I think maybe the healing has to happen with the victims first, before the perpetrators can acknowledge their own wounds."

Relearning a heritage

"The Wiyot are a people who are beginning to learn about themselves again," Seidner says. "Culture gives us our identity. We are not just a name. We have to learn to live our culture, and try to incorporate it in our daily life."

"Cheryl stepped in at a transition point," said Julian Lang, a language scholar and cultural activist whose ancestry includes Karuk and Wiyot. "Before Cheryl, the effort was to regain the Wiyot identity at the political level, to gain recognition and stabilize. Cheryl was able to begin charting a path of development at the cultural level, to begin the cultural rejuvenation. She's looking forward, representing the idea that there is a traditional ceremonial life ahead for the Wiyot."

About 15 years ago, Seidner, who works full time at Humboldt State University, persuaded her older sister, Leona Wilkinson, who recently retired from her job at the college, to take up traditional basket weaving. The beautifully designed and watertight woven baskets, caps and other items had both practical and sacred purposes essential to Wiyot life. Leona had learned it as a girl from their grandmother. Now she teaches her niece and grandniece, beginning with the proper gathering of materials.

Basketry was easy compared with reviving the Wiyot language. There are no fluent Wiyot speakers left -- only some tapes made in the 1950s. Marnie Atkins, Wiyot cultural director, is hoping to attend the Breath of Life conference at UC Berkeley for the second time in June, where she will be paired with a linguist to investigate the archives.

Meanwhile, she will be working with these tapes to create usable lessons that can be disseminated on CDs and over the Internet. Her goal is to get the language "into our ears, and into our children's ears."

Lang has also studied these tapes, and combined what he learned with some singing derived from the Karuk culture for some classes he held for interested Wiyot a few years ago. "There was instant acceptance of that, and an incredible aptitude," he says. "People learned very

fast. Within a month it was like all the cultural knowledge had always been there. It was close to the surface of everybody's soul."

Because the Wiyot have not performed it since the massacre on Indian Island, Seidner acknowledges that they will look to other local tribes for help in reconstructing their world renewal ceremony. Several have similar ceremonies, and they have traditionally participated in each other's dances.

The rest, she says, "will come from our dreams. It's in our DNA."

With what Wiyot words she learned, she created her "coming home" song, which she sang at the end of a PBS airing of a documentary on American Indian sacred sites produced by San Francisco's Sacred Land Film Project.

Sharing among tribes has already begun at the vigils. At last year's event, as participants gathered around the bonfire in the cold clear night, Lang looked up and remarked, "In Wiyot, the word for 'stars' means 'God's eyes. ' " Then he sang a song from the Karuk's world renewal ceremony, the Jump Dance. Joseph Orozco, a member of the Hupa tribe who is the station manager of KIDE-FM, the first tribally owned and operated public radio station in California, sang a mourning song based on the White Deer Dance.

All of this is also preparation for the future, when the vigil will be over and there is a ceremony at the end of February again.

"Cheryl recognizes that land is at the heart of the ceremony," Lang says. "Ceremony needs a place, and there's no more significant place than Tuluwat on Indian Island."

Seidner talks with enthusiasm about members of other tribes "who say, 'We can't wait to be back on the island with you. ... It's getting to the point that they can feel it coming. It's been a real blessing. We realize we are not standing by ourselves.'"

The 13th Annual Indian Island Candlelight Vigil will be held from 6 to 8 p. m. today at the west end of Woodley Island in Eureka. For more information on the vigil, the Wiyot and their Sacred Sites Fund, call (800) 388-7633 or (707) 733-5055 or go to www.wiyot.com. The Humboldt Interrreligious Peace Festival will be from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. today at Humboldt State University's Kate Buchanan and Nelson Hall East rooms. For information call (707) 444-8764.

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Recently many reports appeared talking about the weird creatures, the so-called skyfish. It remains unclear whether the animals are fish, birds or worms.

The mysterious beings have long worm-like bodies with wide projections on their sides (like those of fish). The trouble is, they don't live in water – they live in the air.

No one has come up with a decent name for the animals as of yet. Some suggestions include “flying sticks,” “solar entities,” and “skyfish.”

The first time skyfish was photographed ten years ago by a film director Jose Escamilla. He originally thought that it was a UFO but then he realized that it was some living thing moving at a very high speed.

He began studying them and realized that the animals invade the space everywhere. Besides he discovered that the creatures began reproducing at a much faster rate as a result of the global warming.

Without a specimen in hand to examine, it's impossible to determine whether or not skyfish are living organisms, but it's Escamilla's best guess that they are.

Skyfish have only been captured on film and videotape. No one knows what they are, where they come from, but there are already specialized people – the catchers of skyfish, who mainly live in Japan.

They say that their hobby is not very safe: the animals are terribly poisonous during the fall season. In Japan the skyfish are extremely fast and fly at 300 km/h.

Analysis of film and video of skyfish from around the world indicate that they might range in size from just a few inches to perhaps over a hundred feet in length! How could something that large be unknown? That's the essence of the mystery.

Source: agencies

Published Weekly.

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The History of this Remarkable Being has been specially compiled, for this work only, by one of the Best Authors of the day, and our readers will find that he has undoubtedly succeeded in producing a Wonderful and Sensational Story, every page of which is replete with details of absorbing and thrilling interest.



In 1760 a young Edinburgh schoolmaster named James Macpherson (1736-1796) published a translation of ancient Scottish verse titled *Fragments of Ancient Poetry, Collected in the Highlands of Scotland, and Translated from the Gaelic or Erse Language*. The book received an enthusiastic response. Admirers, including fellow Scots James Boswell and Hugh Blair, raised a subscription to allow Macpherson to further research ancient Scottish verse.

Macpherson traveled to various remote areas of Scotland and claimed that during his travels he discovered an epic poem written in Gaelic by a third-century bard named Ossian. The poem was about a mythological character named Fingal.

In December 1761 Macpherson published a translation of this poem which he titled *Fingal, an Ancient Epic Poem in Six Books, together with Several Other Poems composed by Ossian, the Son of Fingal, translated from the Gaelic Language*.

Two years later Macpherson published a translation of a second epic poem, *Temora*, and in 1765 he produced a collected edition titled *The Works of Ossian*.

The poems became international successes and propelled Macpherson to fame and riches. A mood of anti-rational Romanticism was sweeping across Europe, and this helped to boost the popularity of the poems. Eighteenth-century readers found that the simple, melancholy virtues of the heroic characters in the poems provided an appealing contrast to the complexity and deceit of the modern world.

In fact, Macpherson's translations are widely credited with helping to usher in the romantic movement in European literature. His fans included the German poet Goethe. Even Napoleon declared *The Works of Ossian* to be one of his favorite books.

In addition, the discovery of an ancient literature older than any England or Ireland could boast appealed to Scottish cultural nationalism.

Not all were impressed, especially not Dr. Samuel Johnson, one of the most famous literary figures of that era. Johnson became convinced that the Ossian poems were fakes. To him the verse didn't sound like it had been written by a third-century bard. Instead, it sounded to him like what an overly romantic contemporary writer would imagine that a third-century bard would sound like.

While touring Scotland in 1773 Samuel Johnson searched for the original Gaelic manuscripts that Macpherson had translated. He couldn't find them, and he returned home to denounce the works as fakes.

What followed was a bitter controversy about the authenticity of the works. Macpherson kept promising to produce the Gaelic originals, but never did. At one point he produced some

passages written in Gaelic, but it later turned out that these were passages he had clumsily translated from English into Gaelic.

The feud between Macpherson and Johnson became so bitter that at one point Macpherson sent Johnson a threatening letter. Johnson, believing Macpherson might physically attack him, subsequently slept with an oak staff by his side to protect himself.

It wasn't until Macpherson's death that scholars got a chance to examine his sources. Then it became clear that while there were some legitimate manuscript sources, Macpherson had greatly expanded and altered them. In other words, the poems were principally written by Macpherson himself, not by a third-century Scottish bard.

Although Macpherson is now mainly remembered as a fraud, he did help to draw attention to the ancient and disappearing oral tradition of Scottish balladry, which was real.

Ironically, Macpherson was buried in Westminster Abbey, close to Dr. Johnson.

- Haywood, Ian. *The Making of History: A Study of the Literary Forgeries of James Macpherson and Thomas Chatterton in Relation to Eighteenth-Century Ideas of History and Fiction*. Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1986.
- Murphy, Peter T. "Fool's Gold: The Highland Treasures of MacPherson's Ossian." *ELH*, Volume 53, Issue 3 (Autumn, 1986): 567-591.
- Gray, Paul. (May 16, 1983). "Fakes that have skewed history." *Time*.

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***Jeannette* Arctic Expedition, 1879-1881**
Overview and Selected Images

From 1879-1881 thirty-three Navy officers, enlisted men and civilians, led by Lieutenant Commander George Washington DeLong, participated in an epic Arctic adventure that defines the limits of human will and endurance in an overwhelmingly distant and hostile environment. The undertaking began optimistically on 8 July 1879, when the Navy operated, but privately owned, steamer *Jeannette* left San Francisco, California, for an attempt to reach the North Pole through what was then believed to be open water beyond the Arctic icepack. The ship entered the ice to the east of Wrangell Island on 6 September and, as expected, was held fast within a few days.

Jeannette remained in the ice as it drifted erratically to the northwest during the rest of 1879, all of 1880 and the first half of 1881. During this time, her crew occupied themselves maintaining their ship, making scientific observations, hunting seals and polar bears and, in May 1881, landing on Henrietta Island, some 600 miles from Wrangell. With DeLong's leadership and careful planning, plus the inspired care of Passed Assistant Surgeon James M. Ambler, their health generally remained good, and the ship, though leaking somewhat, was still sound. In June 1881 the ice parted and hopes were entertained that they might reach open sea, but on the 12th the flows closed in with such force that *Jeannette's* hull was crushed. Her crew removed three boats, supplies and some equipment and, after a few days' rest, began a long and very difficult trek, dragging the boats over the rugged ice so they would have means to proceed when open water was reached.

Their goal was the Lena River Delta, nearly 700 miles away on the north Siberian coast. In late July, after a journey prolonged by ice movement, they landed on Bennett Island, still far from the mainland. Resuming the slog, *Jeannette's* men headed southwards through the New Siberian Islands, reaching Kotelnoi and Simonoski Islands in early September, after which the way was clear to sail to the Lena Delta. On 12 September 1881, however, the three boats separated in a storm. One, commanded by Lieutenant Charles W. Chipp and occupied by seven other men, was not seen again. The other two, commanded by DeLong with thirteen others and Chief Engineer George W. Melville with ten others, landed far apart on the delta.

Melville's party soon encountered local inhabitants and were saved. DeLong and his thirteen men waded ashore through the nearly frozen water and began to trudge south over the desolate terrain. After one man died of the effects of frostbite and the others were weakened by exposure and hunger, Seamen Nindemann and Noros were sent ahead to find help. Before that materialized, the remaining eleven succumbed, with DeLong and two others surviving perhaps a few days beyond 30 October 1881, when he made his final journal entry. The bodies of ten were discovered in March 1882, as Melville conducted an exhausting search for the other members of the expedition, and were transported back to the United States in early 1884.

This page features selected views related to the *Jeannette* Expedition, and provides

links to all images we have on the subject.

Comprehensive list of pictorial holdings on the *Jeannette* Arctic exploration expedition of 1879-1881

- U.S. Navy Ships *Jeannette* (1879-1881)
-
- The Expedition Begins, 8 July - 6 September 1879
-
- Drifting in the Arctic Ice, 6 September 1879 - 12 June 1881
-
- Sinking of the *Jeannette*, 12-13 June 1881
-
- *Jeannette's* Men Cross the Ice and Sea, June - September 1881
-
- *Jeannette's* Men in the Lena River Delta
-
- Miscellaneous Views related to the *Jeannette* Expedition
-
- People of the *Jeannette* Expedition

For extensive textual information on this subject, "A Lengthy Deployment: The *Jeannette* Expedition ...".

Click the photograph for a larger image.

Photo #: NH 52001

***Jeannette* Arctic exploring expedition, 1879-1881**

"Entering the Ice"

Engraving by George T. Andrew after a design by M.J. Burns, copied from "The Voyage of the *Jeannette* ...", Volume I, page 117, edited by Emma DeLong, published in 1884. It depicts USS *Jeannette* entering the Arctic Ice, near Herald Island (about 72N, 175W), on 6 September 1879.



U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command Photograph.

Online Image: 153KB; 740 x 555

Photo #: NH 92120

***Jeannette* Arctic exploring expedition, 1879-1881**

Expedition members "Returning from a Bear Hunt", while USS *Jeannette* was icebound north of Siberia, 1880.

Woodcut engraved by George T. Andrew after a design by M.J. Burns, copied from "The Voyage of the Jeannette ...", Volume I, page 363, edited by Emma DeLong, published in 1884. 

U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command Photograph.

Online Image: 131KB; 740 x 485

Photo #: NH 52000

***Jeannette* Arctic exploring expedition, 1879-1881**

"The Sinking of the *Jeannette*"

Engraving by George T. Andrew after a design by M.J. Burns, copied from "The Voyage of the Jeannette ...", Volume II, page 575, edited by Emma DeLong, published in 1884. It depicts USS *Jeannette* after she was crushed by ice flows north of Siberia on 12 June 1881. She sank in the morning of 13 June in position 77 14'57" N, 154 58'45"E. 

U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command Photograph.

Online Image: 148KB; 740 x 460

Photo #: NH 92140

***Jeannette* Arctic exploring expedition, 1879-1881**

Chart depicting the course followed by the USS *Jeannette*'s crew from 12 June 1881, when they abandoned the ship in the ice north of Siberia, to 19 September 1881. 

Copied from "The Voyage of the Jeannette ...", Volume II, page 744, edited by Emma DeLong, published in 1884.

U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command Photograph.

Online Image: 338KB; 955 x 1225

Photo #: NH 52002

***Jeannette* Arctic exploring expedition, 1879-1881**

"Dragging the Boats over the Ice"

Engraving by George T. Andrew after a design by M.J. Burns, copied from "The Voyage of the Jeannette ...", Volume II, page 629, edited by Emma DeLong, published in 1884. It depicts the crew of USS *Jeannette* hauling the ship's boats over the very rough Arctic ice north of Siberia in June-August 1881. *Jeannette* had been crushed in the ice and sunk on 12-13 June. 

U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command Photograph.

Online Image: 175KB; 740 x 525

Photo #: NH 92136

Jeannette Arctic exploring expedition, 1879-1881

Woodcut engraved by George T. Andrew after a design by M.J. Burns, depicting the USS *Jeannette* party "Landing on Bennett Island", north of Siberia, on 29 July 1881, after a difficult pull over water and broken ice.



Copied from "The Voyage of the Jeannette ...", Volume II, page 677, edited by Emma DeLong, published in 1884.

U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command Photograph.

Online Image: 172KB; 740 x 545

Photo #: NH 92141

Jeannette Arctic exploring expedition, 1879-1881

Woodcut engraved by George T. Andrew after a design by M.J. Burns, depicting USS *Jeannette*'s boats separating in a gale northeast of the Lena River Delta, Siberia, on 12 September 1881. The boat commanded by Lieutenant Commander George DeLong (depicted in the foreground) landed at the northern end of the Delta. That commanded by Chief Engineer George W. Melville (background, right) landed on the Delta's eastern side. The boat commanded by Lieutenant Charles W. Chipp (background, left) was not heard of again.



Copied from "The Voyage of the Jeannette ...", Volume II, page 751, edited by Emma DeLong, published in 1884.

U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command Photograph.

Online Image: 152KB; 740 x 565

Photo #: NH 92142

Jeannette Arctic exploring expedition, 1879-1881

Woodcut engraved by George T. Andrew after a design by M.J. Burns, depicting Lieutenant Commander George DeLong and his party wading ashore from USS *Jeannette*'s first cutter, on the north end of the Lena River Delta, Siberia, 17 September 1881.



Copied from "The Voyage of the Jeannette ...", Volume II, page 759, edited by Emma

DeLong, published in 1884.

U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command Photograph.

Online Image: 163KB; 740 x 485

Photo #: NH 92143

Jeannette Arctic exploring expedition, 1879-1881

Woodcut engraved by George T. Andrew after a design by M.J. Burns, depicting Seamen William F.C. Nindemann and Louis P. Noros trudging through the snowy Siberian wastes in search of help for Lieutenant Commander George DeLong's party, October 1881.



Copied from "The Voyage of the Jeannette ...", Volume II, page 793, edited by Emma DeLong, published in 1884.

U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command Photograph.

Online Image: 101KB; 415 x 765

Photo #: NH 92144

Jeannette Arctic exploring expedition, 1879-1881

Facsimile of the next-to-last page of Lieutenant Commander George DeLong's journal, covering 21-24 October 1881, as his party was dying of starvation at the head of the Lena River Delta, Siberia. Numbered days reflect the time since USS *Jeannette* was abandoned in the ice north of Siberia.



Copied from "The Voyage of the Jeannette ...", Volume II, page 798, edited by Emma DeLong, published in 1884.

U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command Photograph.

Online Image: 80KB; 500 x 765

Photo #: NH 92153

"Finding the Bodies of Captain De Long and his Companions."

Chief Engineer George Melville discovers the bodies of Lieutenant Commander George DeLong, Passed Assistant Surgeon James M. Ambler and Seaman Ah Sam, in the Lena River Delta, Siberia, on 23 March 1882. The three men had died in October or early November 1881.



Woodcut engraved by George T. Andrew after a design by Captain Gronbeck, copied

from "The Voyage of the Jeannette ...", Volume II, page 857, edited by Emma DeLong, published in 1884.

U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command Photograph.

Online Image: 126KB; 740 x 480

Photo #: NH 52006

Jeannette Arctic exploring expedition, 1879-1881

Engraving of the expedition's survivors, based on a photograph taken at Yakutsk, Siberia, in 1882. Those present are

(left to right, in front): Lauderback, Bartlett, William Coles, Seaman William F.C. Nindemann, and Mansen.

(left to right, in middle): Chief Engineer George W. Melville and Lieutenant John W. Danenhower.



(left to right, in back): Raymond Lee Newcomb (naturalist), Seaman Louis P. Noros, Henry Wilson, Tong Sing (cook), Anequin and H.W. Leach.

U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command Photograph.

Online Image: 173KB; 740 x 540

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October 21, 2014 | by Kristy Hamilton



Photo credit: Courtesy of Naomi Kizhner

Naomi Kizhner, an industrial designer and graduate student from Hadassah College in Jerusalem, has designed jewelry that theoretically extracts energy from the wearers own body. The 'speculative' jewelry is embedded into the person's veins and uses their blood to turn small wheels inside the device.

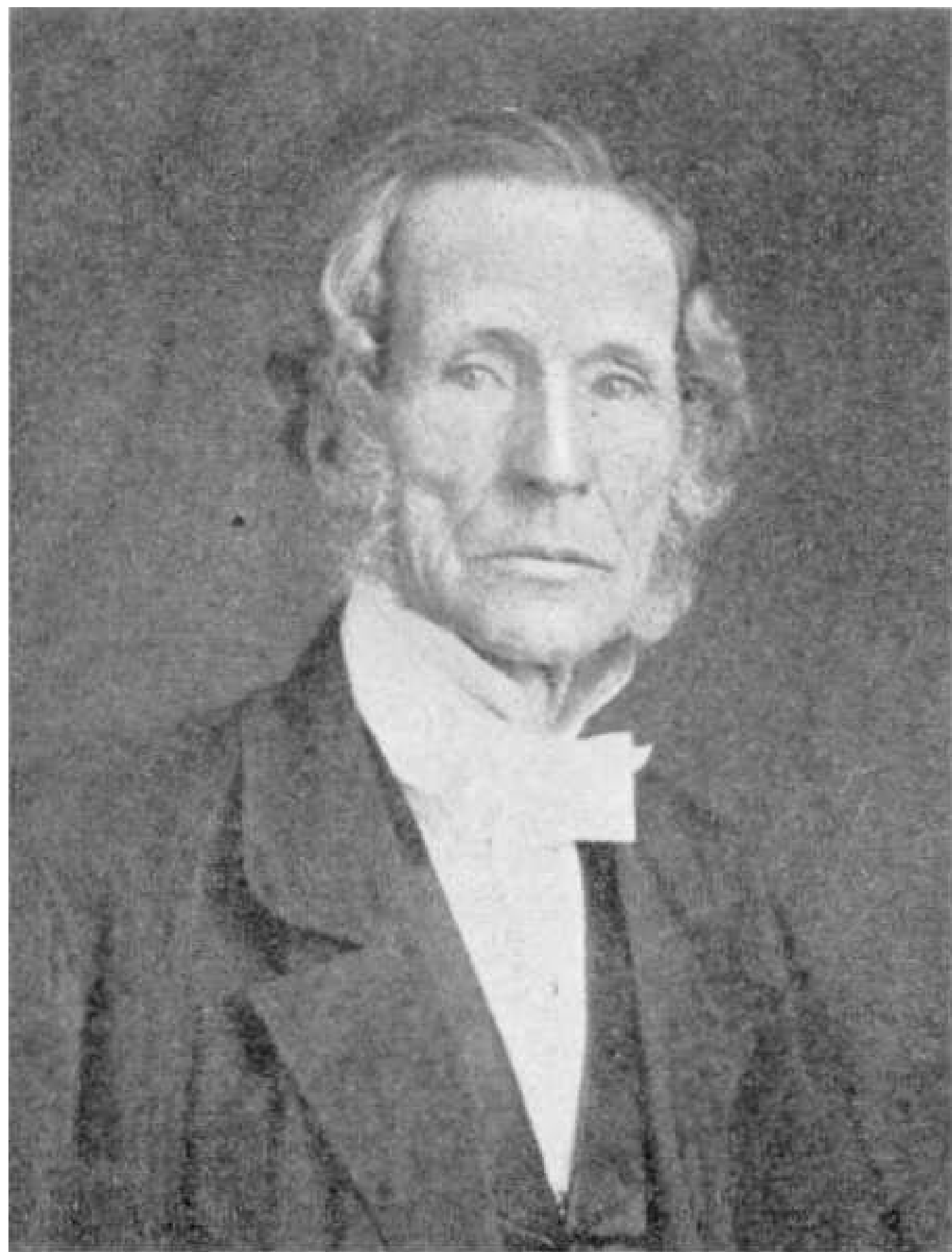
Courtesy of Naomi Kizhner

As Naomi notes, the jewelry is not meant to be a practical energy source, but a discussion piece "about how far will we go to in order to 'feed' our addiction in the world of declining resources."

The project is called 'Energy Addicts' and consists of three pieces of jewelry: The Blinker, The E-Pulse Conductor, and The Blood Bridge. On her website, she says "The work delves into a world in which there is a significant decline, which forces humanity to seek all the more forcefully

for alternative ways of cultivating power. The suggested solution to the dilemma is based on the idea of biological wealth, harvesting energy directly from the body."

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John Denver bust missing after heavy-metal ball

Updated 7:04 pm, Friday, October 31, 2014

seattlepi.com



In this May 2011 handout photo, made available on Oct. 30, 2014 by the Colorado Music Hall of Fame, a bust of the late Colorado musician John Denver sits on the induction wall at the Colorado Music Hall of Fame Museum at the 1st Bank Center in Broomfield, Colo. Police say the bust was stolen from the 1st Bank Center during KBPI-FM's Saints and Sinners Halloween Ball on the night of Tuesday, Oct. 28. Photo: Rich Clarkson And Associates, AP In this May 2011 handout photo, made available on Oct. 30, 2014 by...

DENVER (AP) — A Denver radio station that sponsored a heavy-metal Halloween ball is pleading for the return of a bust of John Denver that went missing during the party.

Someone at KBPI-FM's Saints and Sinners ball Tuesday night pried the bronze bust off its base at the 1st Bank Center in the Denver suburb of Broomfield. The station is asking whoever took the bust to return it undamaged to its studios, no questions asked.

The statue belongs to the Colorado Music Hall of Fame. It was donated by Denver's family when he became its first inductee in 2011. Director G. Brown says concertgoers often pose with the bust or pat it on the head as they pass by.

Police said they had no leads as of Thursday.

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No. 8502

Land Office, Fort Wayne, Ia. *March 11th*

1886

I *John Chapman*
of *Allen* county, *Ind* do hereby apply for the purchase of *87 1/2* Section numbered *4* in Township numbered *31* N. of Range numbered *15* E. containing *18.70* acres, according to the returns of the Surveyor General, for which I have agreed with the Register to give at the rate of one dollar and twenty-five cents per acre.

John Chapman

I, ROBERT BRACKENRIDGE, Register of the Land Office, do hereby certify, that the lot above described, contains *18.70* acres, as mentioned, and that the price agreed upon is one dollar and twenty-five cents per acre.

R Brackenridge Register.



2 popular images of Johnny Appleseed
Not even close to reality







James Curley, former Mayor of Boston.

In the Fall of 1924 the Prince of Wales visited Massachusetts. Foregoing official visits, he spent his time hunting at the home of a friend, Bayard Tuckerman Jr. Maintaining a low profile was understandable, given the tensions at that time between England and Ireland. Massachusetts was the home of many Irish immigrants and was, as the *New York Times* put it, "given to a greater love for Erin than Britain." Government officials in Massachusetts seemed inclined to ignore the presence of the Prince.

However, while the Prince was hunting, his equerry, the Hon. Captain Lascelles, was approached by a man who identified himself as Lafayette Mulligan, "the social secretary to the Mayor of Boston, James M. Curley." Mulligan presented Lascelles with a golden key to the City of Boston, which he said was a gift from the Mayor to the Prince. Mulligan also delivered the Prince a formal invitation to visit Boston and be the guest of Mayor Curley.

The Prince of Wales later sent Mayor Curley a letter, warmly thanking him for the gift of the key, which he happily accepted, but regretfully declining the invitation to visit the city as the Mayor's guest, citing his inability to change his plans on such short notice.

The letter from the Prince shocked Mayor Curley — not because the Prince turned down the invitation, but because, to his knowledge, he had sent the Prince neither a key nor an invitation. Curley issued an angry public denial, stating he had no idea who Lafayette Mulligan was, but insisting the man was NOT his social secretary. (His real social secretary was Standish Willcox.)

The joke was that Curley was the son of Irish immigrants, and his core constituency was Boston's Irish working class. He was the last person who would have attempted to curry favor with the Prince of Wales. It was for this reason that the joke annoyed Curley so intensely.

The New York Times, Dec. 18 1924

Popular Reaction

PRINCE GOT KEY TO BOSTON.

But Mayor Curley Denies Golden Gift to Britain's Heir.

Special to The New York Times.
BOSTON, Mass., Dec. 17.—A gold key to the City of Boston and an invitation to visit Mayor James M. Curley, either at his home or at City Hall, were received by the Prince of Wales during his recent stay on the north shore. It was revealed today.

The communication was signed by "Lafayette Mulligan, Social Secretary to His Honor, Mayor James M. Curley." The Mayor today denied that he had sent one of the gold keys to the Prince. He denied also having extended him an invitation to be the city's guest. Mayor Curley has no secretary by the name of Mulligan and his social secretary is Standish Willcox.

To make matters worse, the Mayor has received two letters of thanks for his kind invitations. One is from Bayard Tuckerman Jr., who was host to the Prince and his party at Hamilton. The other is from the Prince's secretary, Captain J. F. Lascelles, expressing the gratitude of his Royal Highness for the good wishes of the people of Boston as conveyed by their Mayor.

The New York Times described the Lafayette Mulligan stunt as "one of the most calmly and insolently audacious hoaxes that ever roused a staid city [Boston] to joyousness."

Curley's political opponents immediately hailed Mulligan as a hero. Councilman Daniel Lane proposed that Boston's Lafayette Mall be renamed Lafayette Mulligan Mall. Or, failing that, perhaps Lafayette Mull. The motion was denied.

Diners at formal dinners attended by the Mayor were heard to shout for Lafayette Mulligan.



An actual key to the City of Boston
image via State Library of Massachusetts blog

Mulligan, for his part, continued his escapades. After the Mayor denied giving the Prince a key,

Mulligan sent a key to Mr. Tuckerman, citing Tuckerman's "gracious silence following the Mayor's repudiation of his original generous impulse." Mulligan signed the letter, "former Social Secretary to his Honor, Mayor James M. Curley."

This prompted Mayor Curley to declare his intention not to give away any more keys to the city, on account of the competition from Lafayette Mulligan. He said he would wait until Mulligan died. Though in actuality Curley continued to give away keys to the city. There are records of him, in 1925, presenting keys to Chinese General Consul Ziangling Chang and to the Belgian ambassador.

The Search for Lafayette Mulligan

Mayor Curley demanded an investigation to find out the identity of Lafayette Mulligan. However, the search yielded no clues. At one point, Curley even employed the Burns Detective Agency to track him down. Britain's Scotland Yard also became involved, since they regarded it as a matter of national security to find out who had tricked the Prince.

The *Boston Herald* received a letter from Mulligan, with a return address of "Forty-two Beacon Street." This was the address of the Somerset Club, one of Boston's most exclusive clubs, of which Bayard Tuckerman was a member. Therefore, suspicion centered on the club. However, the members, including Tuckerman, denied any knowledge of the identity of Lafayette Mulligan.

Mayor Curley later announced his belief that Frank Buxton, a Pulitzer Prize winning reporter for *The Boston Herald*, was really Lafayette Mulligan. Buxton vociferously denied the charge.

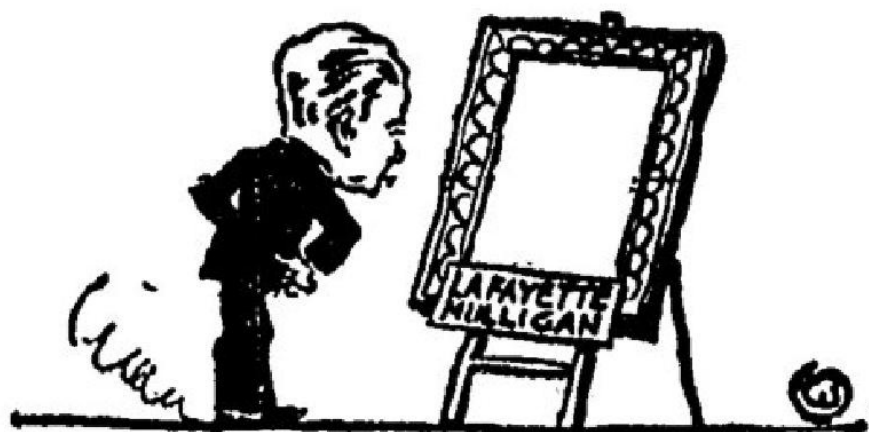


Illustration depicting the mystery of Lafayette Mulligan's identity from *The New York Times*, Dec. 15 1929

The Mayor received a number of satirical letters from Mulligan. The correspondence was written on fine quality

paper with Mulligan's name embossed in pale green. However, they contained no return address, and the post office was unable to track down their sender.

The identity of Lafayette Mulligan was never determined.

Curley went on to serve as Governor of Massachusetts from 1935 to 1937.

An Outbreak of Mulliganism in England

Soon after the Lafayette Mulligan incident had made headlines in America, the residents of Boston, England all received an invitation to the home of the Mayor and Mayoress of that town. The invitations stated that the reception was in honor of "the social secretary of the Mayor of Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.A."

Photographers and reporters were sent notices inviting them to appear. Caterers and merchants were also ordered to bring goods.

However, neither the invitations nor the delivery orders were genuine. It took weeks to sort out the resulting confusion.

A New Lafayette Mulligan

In 1927 a curious deception was exposed that reminded many of the Lafayette Mulligan stunt of three years previous.

William Ryan, a fifty-year-old Boston city lamplighter, was discovered to have been sending out letters to world leaders inviting them to attend Boston's three-hundredth anniversary celebrations. He had been sending out four invitations a day for an entire year. He seemed to believe he could single-handedly organize a "League of World Cities," and envisioned himself as an "apostle of world peace." On his letters, he used the slogan "City Hall, the Gateway to World Peace."

Ryan's activities were only found out when Boston City Hall began receiving acceptances from officials in cities such as Moscow, London, and Berlin. Government officials scrambled to uninvite everyone whom Ryan had contacted.

Newspapers described Ryan as a new Lafayette Mulligan.

- "Hoaxer mystifies Bostons of New and Old England." (March 1, 1925). The New York Times.
- "No more keys to Boston: Mayor Curley will wait until Lafayette Mulligan dies." (Dec. 21, 1924). The New York Times.
- "Sends another key to City of Boston." (Dec. 25, 1924). The New York Times.
- "Boston Council frowns on Lafayette Mulligan." (Dec. 30, 1924). The Lowell Sun.
- "Invites noted men to city and creates stir." (Oct 3, 1927). The Danville Bee.
- Blackington, Alton Hall. (1956). *More Yankee Yarns*. Pg. 230.

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Her name is associated with a candy company that is found in almost every Canadian shopping mall. Yet, she never made any chocolate.

Laura Secord's adventures started when her husband, James Secord, a sergeant in the 1st Lincoln militia was wounded early on in the War of 1812. She managed to rescue him from the battlefield during the battle of Queenston Heights. He was lucky to survive this battle as others, such as Major-General Isaac Brock, did not.

In June of 1813, Queenston was still occupied by American troops when James and Laura Secord were forced to host some American officers in their home. That's when she overheard the Americans plan to surprise the British outpost at Beaver Dams and capture the officer in charge, Lieutenant James FitzGibbon. Her husband, given his injuries, was unable to deliver this message to the British so she set out to do it herself. The direct route to the outpost was 12 miles (about 20 kilometers), and Laura was worried that she would encounter American guards on her way there. She decided it would be better to travel through fields and forests; it wasn't easy and when she finally arrived, she was exhausted.

After she crossed the Twelve Mile Creek on a fallen tree, Laura was surprised to come upon a First Nations' encampment. Once her mission was explained, the chief took her directly to FitzGibbon. Two days later, American troops were ambushed near Beaver Dams by First Nations warriors. FitzGibbon then persuaded the much larger American forces to surrender.

Official reports of the victory make no mention of her. However, FitzGibbon later recounted her contribution.

June 22, 2013 will mark the 200th anniversary of Laura Secord's historic walk to warn the British outpost of the impending enemy attack. Over the years, her heroic efforts have been documented in many ways. Here are some of them:



*Statue of Laura Secord, U.E.
Courtesy of Canada's
Capital/National Capital*

- A Laura Secord statue was installed in 2006 at the Valiants Memorial, located in downtown Ottawa. To learn more about the memorial, listen to these audio clips.
- Canada Post issued a Laura Secord 42 cent stamp in September, 1992.
- Canada Post will also issue a new stamp in 2013.



Ghost of Lavinia Fisher

It should come as no surprise with a terrible story such as this, that the ghost of Lavinia is said to still roam in Charleston. Almost immediately following her death, locals began to report seeing her face floating behind the bars of the window where she was held. Then, after the Great Earthquake of 1886, people began to report her wandering around in other parts of the neighborhood, as well as the Unitarian Cemetery just a few blocks away.

The Old Jail building served as the Charleston County Jail from its construction in 1802 until 1939. Way back in 1680, when the city of Charleston was being laid out, a four-acre square of land was set aside at this location for public use. In time, a hospital, poor house, workhouse for runaway slaves, and the jail were built on the square.

The first structures were erected on the site in 1738 when the property was used as a workhouse for runaway slaves and makeshift hospital for "paupers, vagrants, and beggars." Criminals were also housed here before the Old Jail building was erected, though they were kept separate from non-offenders. Punishments and executions also took place at this location. Criminals faced whippings, brandings, torture, and deprivation of food and water. For horse thieves, their ears were sometimes nailed to a post before finally sliced off altogether. For the worst offenders, they might be burned at the stake, hanged, or drawn and quartered. Over the years, numerous structures were built, demolished, and rebuilt.

When the Jail was constructed in 1802 it consisted of four stories, topped with a two-story octagonal tower. Later changes were made to the building including a rear octagonal wing, expansions to the main building and the Romanesque Revival details. Unfortunately, the 1886 earthquake badly damaged the tower and top story of the main building, and these were removed.

In the 137 years that the building was in operation, it not only served as a jail, but also, an asylum, housing a great variety of inmates, including John and Lavinia Fisher. In the early part of the 1800's, numerous high-sea pirates were jailed here, and after Denmark Vesey's planned slave revolt in 1822, hundreds were incarcerated awaiting their trials. Vesey, a freed slave, planned an insurrection that called for free blacks to assist hundreds of slaves to kill their owners and temporarily seize the city of Charleston before sailing away to Haiti. However, the plot was leaked and hundreds of blacks were arrested in the conspiracy. In total, 67 men were convicted and 35 hanged, including Denmark Vesey. Increased restrictions were afterwards placed on slaves and free blacks, including a law that all black seaman be kept at the jail while they were in port. During the Civil War, both Confederate and Federal prisoners of war were incarcerated here.

Though the jail was intended to hold around 128 prisoners, over the years, as many as 300

people were often incarcerated at one time. In some rooms, prisoners were locked in cages, barely the size of a person's body. Disease, torture, and violence within the walls of this historic building were rampant and an estimated 10,000 people died on the property during its operation. The jail was finally closed in 1939 and for the next 61 years it sat abandoned. However, in 2000, the American College of the Building Arts acquired the Old City Jail building and immediately established a stabilization program. Today, the Old City Jail is an official "Save America's Treasures" project of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and efforts to restore and maintain the building are ongoing.

Reports of strange occurrences began with the restoration efforts in 2000. One of the first reports was workers finding footprints in the dust after the building had been locked off for months due to lead paint contamination. More and more anomalies occurred as preservation continued and the building was opened for tours.

Several apparitions have been reported including several workers who saw the ghost of a jailer with a rifle on the third floor. The phantom was said to have passed through the bars heading toward them before it vanished. Others have reported seeing a black man in ragged clothing wandering aimlessly in the halls. Thought to be the spirit of a former slave, the man is seemingly unaware of the living or his surroundings. But, the Old Jail's most famous ghost is that of the cruel killer, Lavinia Fisher. Several who have visited the historic building, often claim to have seen the woman in her wedding dress, describing it as being bright red and white.

Strange sounds are heard throughout the building including the hum of a dumbwaiter moving through the floors, even though it hasn't been operational in years. Alarms are said to go on and off randomly.



*Charleston
Jail*

For others, their experiences have been physical. Visitors and employees alike have complained of a choking feeling and shortness of breath while on the main staircase. Others report being grabbed, pushed, touched and scratched by unseen forces. A tour guide tells a story of feeling a rope wrap around her ankle and a man in the basement had his sunglasses knocked off by a violent, unseen force.

Other strange happenings also allegedly occur, such as terrible odors that are so bad as to make people feel ill. Others report feelings of being watched. In the basement, even though the temperatures may be quite warm, visitors have seen their breath come out in a cloud of fog. Doors are found open after being closed.

Access to the jail is limited, and most easily accessed through various ghost tour companies in Charleston. The Old City Jail is located at 21 Magazine & 17 Franklin Streets.

There are a number tales that Lavinia also haunts the Unitarian Cemetery, where some sources say she was buried. This; however is very unlikely as there was a Potter's Field Cemetery next to the jail at the time, where most criminals were buried if their bodies weren't claimed by family members. Additionally, church records have been searched, indicating no

evidence that she was buried there. This tale has likely been perpetuated by tour guides.

Update September 2012: The television show Ghost Hunters season premier featured a visit to the old Charleston Jail, where a skeptical camera operator experienced the scratches first hand, which were visible on camera.

© Kathy Weiser/Legends of America, updated September, 2012.

Widely recognized as the first female serial killer in the United States, Lavinia Fisher was born in 1793, but, the location of her birth, her maiden name, or any information about her childhood, is unknown.

However, she grew up to marry a man named John Fisher and the couple lived near Charleston, South Carolina. The pair made their living operating a hotel called the Six Mile Wayfarer House, which they managed in the early 1800's. Mysteriously, men who were visiting Charleston began to disappear. As more and more reports were filed with the authorities regarding these missing men, it was determined that they were last seen at the Six Mile Wayfarer House, which was called such because it was six miles outside of Charleston.



Charleston,
South
Carolina

Though the local authorities began an investigation, there was no evidence that the Fishers were involved. This, coupled with their popularity in the town, led to the investigation being dropped.

Charleston,
South
Carolina.

Lavinia was a very beautiful and charming woman, adding to her popularity in the community and to the business of the hotel. However, it would later be learned that she utilized those characteristics to help her husband rob and kill many male travelers. And, as more and more men went missing, the rumor mill began to do its work.

The locals soon gathered up a group of vigilantes who went to the Fishers in February, 1819 to stop the activities that were occurring there. Though it is unknown what they may have said or done, they were obviously satisfied with their task and returned to Charleston, leaving one man by the name of David Ross to stand watch in the area.

Early the next morning, David Ross was attacked by two men and dragged before a group of men along with Lavinia Fisher. He looked to her for help, but instead, she choked him and smashed his head through a window. Somehow, Ross was able to escape and alerted authorities.

At nearly the same time, a man named John Peebles was traveling from Georgia to Charleston and tired from his long trip, stopped at The Six Mile House to see if they had a room. He was warmly greeted by the beautiful Lavinia who informed him they didn't have a room available but invited him in for tea and a meal.

Her company was so pleasant that he ignored Lavinia's husband's odd glances at him and chatted with her, answering her every question. When she excused herself from the table for a moment, she returned with tea and good news. A room had suddenly become available if John still wanted it. He accepted and Lavinia poured him a cup of tea.

But, John didn't like tea, but didn't want to seem impolite. So, instead of refusing it or

leaving it untouched, he poured it out when she wasn't looking. Afterwards, she showed him to his room. He then began to wonder why she had asked him so many questions. Why was her husband staring at him all evening?

Suddenly, he felt uncomfortable with all the information that he had provided and worried if he might become a target for robbery. Feeling safer in the chair by the door than in the bed, he dozed until he was awakened by a loud noise. Looking around, he realized that the bed he should have been sleeping in had disappeared into a deep hole beneath the floor. John quickly jumped out the window, got on his horse and fled to authorities in Charleston.

Police then arrested John and Lavinia Fisher, as well as two men they had been operating with.

The Six Mile Wayfarer House was thoroughly searched and the grounds dug up. Filled with hidden passages, the Sheriff reportedly found items that could be traced to dozens of travelers, a tea laced with an herb that could put someone to sleep for hours, a mechanism that could be triggered to open the floorboards beneath the bed, and in the basement, as many as a hundred sets of remains.

The Fishers plead not guilty, but were ordered to stay in jail until their trial. In the meantime, their co-conspirators were released on bail. At their trial in May, the jury didn't agree with their innocent plea, found them guilty of multiple robberies and murders, and they were sentenced to hang. However, they were given time to appeal the conviction.



Old
Charleston
Jail

During the wait, they occupied themselves making a plan to escape. Housed together in a jail that was not heavily guarded, they began making a rope from jail linens. On September 13, they put their plan in place and used the rope to drop down to the ground. John made it out but the rope broke, leaving Lavinia trapped in the cell. Not willing to go without his wife, he returned to the jail and the two were afterwards, kept under much tighter security.

In February, 1820, the Constitutional Court rejected their appeal and their execution was scheduled for later that month.

A local minister named Reverend Richard Furman was sent in to counsel the pair if they so wished. John freely talked to Furman and is said to have begged the priest to save his soul if not his life. However, the cruel Lavinia would have nothing to do with him.

On the morning of February 18, 1820 the Fishers were taken from the Charleston Jail to be hanged on the gallows behind the building. John Fisher went quietly praying with the minister, whom he had asked to read a letter. Before a crowd of some 2,000 people, the letter insisted on his innocence and asked for mercy for those who had done him wrong in the judicial process. He then began to verbally plead his case before the gathered crowd,

but before he was hanged, asked for their forgiveness.

Lavinia did not go so quietly. She had requested to wear her wedding dress and refusing to walk to the gallows, had to be picked up and carried as she ranted and raved. Before the crowd, she continued to scream, pointedly at the Charleston socialites, who she blamed for encouraging a conviction. Before her executioners could tighten the noose around her neck, she yelled into the crowd, "If you have a message you want to send to hell, give it to me – I'll carry it." Then, before they could finish the job, she jumped off the scaffold herself. Not quite reaching the ground, she dangled down into the crowd. Later, onlookers would say they had never seen such a wicked stare or chilling sneer as that which was on 27 year-old Lavinia's face.

Though many sources say that the Fishers were buried in the Unitarian Church Graveyard located between King and Archdale Streets in Charleston, this is highly unlikely. There was a Potter's Field Cemetery next to the jail at the time, where most criminals were buried if their bodies weren't claimed by family members. Additionally, church records have been searched, indicating no evidence that she was buried there. This tale has likely been perpetuated by tour guides.

Many things were created by the sea and were here only a short time ago. The Human Race, ambitious and brave, cannot at times understand the vast arena of Time in which the ocean works. Man would build upon the creations of the sea only to be devastated when those entities were called back to the waters. Like a slow whirlpool sucking everything into itself, the timeless sea has no care whether something is its own or of man. In the end, all things are pulled back into the sea. Its power is ultimate.

Tucker's Island

There is no greater example of the effect Tide and Time has on the Jersey Shore than that of Tucker's Island. Like the legendary island of myth, this small isle is the Jersey Shore's Atlantis.

Once, it lay off the southern end of Long Beach Island, a separate isle known as Short Beach. The Tide, washing in and out of Little Egg Harbor Bay, slowly built up shoals that would connect Short Beach to Long Beach. Meanwhile, Time would see the small island's name changed to Tucker's Island and the creation of a small resort known as Sea Haven. Men would come to build a lighthouse and a life saving station, only to have Nature wash both into the sea. Finally, the Atlantic would claim the entire island.

Short Beach

Situated at the entrance of Little Egg Harbor Bay, Short Beach was a natural resting place for seafarers during storms or long voyages. Ephraim Morse took advantage of this location and provided supplies and shelter to passing sailors. The island's cool breezes and beaches began to attract summer visitors, and during the mid 1700's, Short Beach became the first resort on the Jersey Shore.

The island was to gain a new name through the popularity of it's second inhabitant, Reuben Tucker. Mr. Tucker purchased the land in 1765 and built a large house with a tavern on the highest point of the island. The house grew into a large boarding house and prospered until it burned down in 1845. Tucker's Island or Tucker's Beach became well known all along the Eastern Seaboard.

Tuckerton, New Jersey was named after Reuben Tucker's son, Ebenezer. Ebenezer was to become very successful as a businessman, and his influence on the mainland was so great that the people of Clamtown changed the name of their home to Tuckerton.

By the dawn of the Civil War, sand had built up between Long Beach Island and Tucker's Island. The Old Inlet separating the two islands was blocked. People could then walk from Tucker's Beach to the new resort of Beach Haven on LBI. In the 1880's, plans were drawn up for extending the Beach Haven Railroad to Sea Haven (the community formed on Tucker's Beach). However, the small resort could not compete with Beach Haven and would not last.

A 1920 storm would once again separate the two islands and mark the beginning of the end for Tucker's Island. By 1927, the erosion was so bad that the lighthouse fell into the sea. Like Atlantis, the entire island was eventually swallowed up by the ocean.

Tucker's Island may yet be reborn. Today, Beach Haven Inlet is slowly closing and new shoals and sandbars are building up at the south end of Long Beach Island to reform Tucker's Beach.

Little Egg Harbor Lighthouse

In 1848, Little Egg Harbor Lighthouse or Tucker's Beach Light was built on the former site of the Tucker's boardinghouse. The inlet it marked however was closing up, and by 1860, Tucker's Beach was part of Long Beach Island. The lighthouse became obsolete as a marker for the Old Inlet. So, it was not used for several years.

After the Civil War, Little Egg Harbor Lighthouse was reconditioned and used to warn mariners to check their charts for Little Egg Harbor Inlet, which was three miles south of the light. Six red flashes and one long white beam told sailors that the inlet was not next to the lighthouse. The beacon could be seen quite a distance out to sea.

Unlike the lighthouse at Barnegat Inlet, this was not a sleek tower. The building looked just like a normal home with a black square tower and the lens assembly stuck on the top. One family lived in the keeper's house during the entire sixty-three years the light was in service. Eber Rider, the first keeper, was succeeded by his son Arthur.

Tucker's Beach was once again separated from Long Beach Island in 1920. The sea slowly eroded the island until it reached the base of the lighthouse. Finally, in October of 1927, the foundation of the building was attacked by the Atlantic, and the light fell into the water.

The Resort of Sea Haven

Inspired by the popularity of Beach Haven on Long Beach Island, Alfred Stevens built the Columbia Hotel on Tucker's Island. Eber Rider, keeper of the Little Egg Harbor Lighthouse, built another large boarding house called St. Alban's. Between 1875 and 1886, the small community grew and prospered. It was called Sea Haven, and vacationers were ferried to the area from Edge Cove.

Unfortunately, when a railroad line reached Long Beach Island in 1886, it stopped at Beach Haven instead of continuing to Sea Haven. The resort community on Tucker's Beach could no longer compete and both hotels were eventually abandoned.

Sea Haven would eventually be swallowed by the sea as Tucker's Island eroded away into nothingness.

Letters to God found dumped in ocean off New Jersey -

USATODAY.com

Updated 11/2/2006 8:18 PM ET

usatoday.com

ATLANTIC CITY (AP) — Some of the letters are comical (a man asking God to let him win the lottery, twice), others are heartbreaking (a distraught teen asking forgiveness for an abortion, an unwed mother pleading with God to make the baby's father marry her).

The letters — about 300 in all, sent to a New Jersey minister — ended up dumped in the ocean, most of them unopened.

The minister died two years ago at 79. How the letters, some dating to 1973, wound up bobbing in the surf is a mystery.

"There are hundreds of lives here, a lot of struggle, washed up on the beach," said Bill Lacovara, a Ventnor insurance adjuster who was fishing last month with his son when he spotted a flowered plastic shopping bag and waded out to retrieve it. "This is just a hint of what really happens. How many letters like this all over the world aren't being opened or answered?"

Many of the letters were addressed to the Rev. Grady Cooper, though many more simply said "Altar." According to the text of several of them, they were intended to be placed on a church's altar and prayed over by the minister, the congregation or both.

Some were neatly written in script on white-lined paper, others in a feverish scrawl on tattered scraps of parchment or note cards. Many were crinkled from being in the water and then dried out after Lacovara fished them out of the sea.

A dog-eared business card inside one of the letters identified Cooper as associate pastor of the Mount Calvary Baptist Church in Jersey City. A woman who answered the phone at the church office confirmed Cooper once was a minister there, and had died nearly two years ago. The current pastor did not return several calls from The Associated Press over the past few days.

Other documents in the bag, including bank statements and canceled checks, also listed Cooper's name and an address for him in Jersey City. A death certificate issued in 2004 for a Grady Cooper lists the same address as those on the bank documents and some of the letters.

His wife, Frances, whose name also showed up on some of the letters at the same address, died in 2000, according to Hudson County records.

No one answered the door last week at the address where Cooper once lived, and a neighbor said he did not recall anyone by that name. Attempts to locate Cooper's relatives were unsuccessful.

Lacovara speculated that someone cleaning out Cooper's home found the letters and threw

them on the beach in Atlantic City, about 100 miles from Jersey City.

"I guess rather than just throw them in the garbage, maybe they thought they'd set them out to sea to bless these people," he said. "So they made a trip to Atlantic City, maybe went to a casino, and put the letters in the water."

The letters, wrapped in several smaller brown paper bags inside the larger plastic bag, did not appear to have been in the water too long, Lacovara said, though about half were too badly damaged to be legible.

He opened a few with his son, Rocky, on the beach. The first few were humorous.

"I'm still praying to hit the lottery twice: first the \$50,000," one man wrote. "Than after some changes have taken place let me hit the millionaire."

Another asked God to make a certain someone "leave me alone and stay off my back," while still another asks God to calm a woman who "call the Internal Revenue on me."

One woman complained that her husband always talks about sex, and another writer anonymously dropped a dime to God on someone cheating on his wife, complete with dates, times and locations.

But those, Lacovara soon found, were the exception.

Many more were written by anguished spouses, children or widows, pouring out their hearts to God, asking for help with relatives who were using drugs, gambling or cheating on them. One man wrote from prison, saying he was innocent and wanted to be back home with his family. A woman wrote that her boyfriend was now closing the door to her daughter's bedroom each night when it used to stay open, and wondered why.

A teenager poured out her heart on yellow-lined paper in the curlicue pencil handwriting of a schoolgirl, begging God to forgive her and asking for a second chance.

"Lord, I know that I have had an abortion and I killed one of your angels," she wrote. "There is not a day that goes by that I don't think about the mistake I made."

One unwed mother wrote that her baby was due in four weeks, and asked God to make the father fall in love with her and marry her so the child would have a father.

Lacovara said he is sad that most of the writers never had their letters read. But he hopes to change that soon: He is putting the collection up for sale on eBay.

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Posted 11/2/2006 8:15 PM ET



Tucker's Island Lighthouse

Sometimes entire towns were swept away with the lighthouses that were built to serve them. This is what happened at Tucker's Island, an old-fashioned resort on the south Jersey Shore. Beginning in 1868 and for nearly sixty years afterward, the Tucker's Island Lighthouse guided vessels along the New Jersey Coast. Then, in 1927, it fell into the sea. The collapse of the lighthouse removed

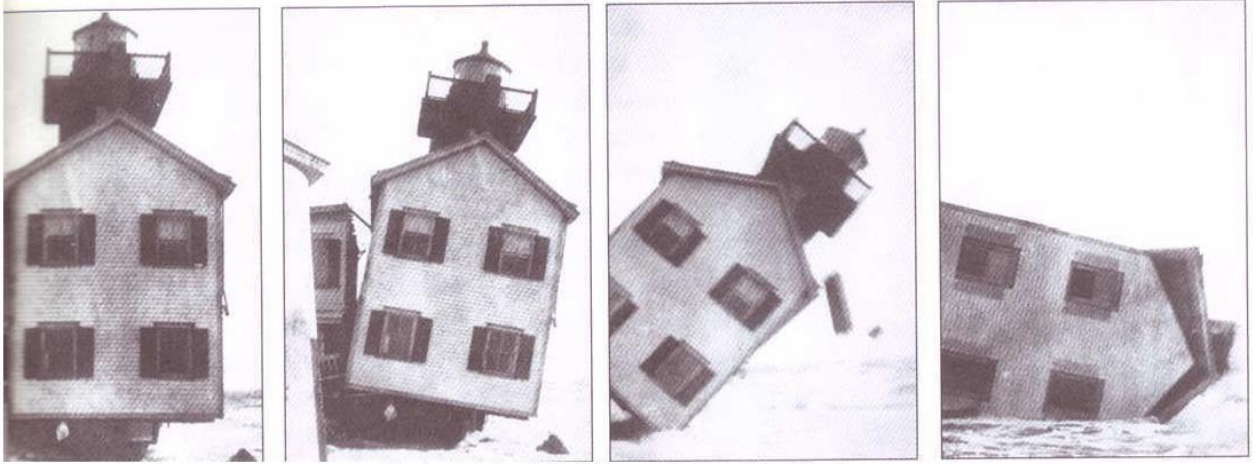
the last human hold on Tucker's Island, which had at one time nurtured a small but vibrant community. Soon afterwards the Atlantic swept away the island itself.

Although few persons remember it now, Tucker's Island was one of the first resorts in America, if not the world. Ephraim Morse, who settled here in 1735, decided that he could do more with property than just raise cattle on the scrubby grass. He and his descendants operated a boardinghouse on the island, and it attracted wealthy Philadelphia sportsmen who came to the shore to hunt and fish. In time, the Morse family boardinghouse was accompanied by several well-appointed hotels and dozens of handsome cottages.

The island's first navigational beacon had been the Little Egg Harbor Light, established in 1848. Hardly more than a lantern placed on top of a large frame house; it went dark shortly before the Civil War. After the war, however, Tucker's Island would receive a full-fledged lighthouse. A fine, two-story structure, it was painted white with red trim. With a focal plane about 50 feet above the water, its red beacon could be seen for 12 miles at sea.

Tucker's Island residents were quite proud of their lighthouse just as they were of their town. But time and lack of railroad access had already begun to take their toll, and by the twentieth century, the entire community had fallen into steady decline. A disastrous nor'easter in 1920 provided the final blow. Awash in the tides and undercut by erosion, the hotels and homes were abandoned. By 1927, the lighthouse was the last prominent structure remaining on the island. Then it succumbed as well. Today, you won't find Tucker's Island on a map. Like Atlantis, it is now buried under the ocean.

The Tucker's Island Lighthouse replica was rebuilt in 1999 as part of Tuckerton Seaport in Tuckerton, New Jersey.



Tucker's Island Lighthouse Falling Into The Sea.

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In 1750 the British Royal Society received a curious report titled *Lucina Sine Concubita*, which translated means "Pregnancy without Intercourse".

In the letter the writer argued that women could become pregnant without having engaged in any sexual activity, due to the presence of microscopic "floating animalcula"

present in the air. The author claimed to have isolated some of these animalcula using "a wonderful, cylindrical, catoptrical, rotundo-concavo-convex machine." When he examined these animalcula under a microscope he found them to be shaped like miniature men and women. This discovery, he suggested, would go a long way toward restoring the honor of women who could not otherwise explain their pregnancies. An engraving accompanying the letter showed a "floating animalcula" approaching a sleeping woman.

The author concluded by proposing that, for the purpose of experimentation, a royal edict should ban copulation for one year.

The letter was signed by Abraham Johnson, but this was a pseudonym of Sir John Hill. His intent was apparently to satirize the "spermist" theory, which held that sperm were actually little men (homunculi) that, when placed inside women, grew into children.

The letter proved very popular and was printed and distributed widely throughout Europe.

It is also said that Hill wrote the letter to revenge himself for having been denied membership to the Royal Society. (Needs confirmation)

- Evans, R.J.W. and Marr, Alexander. (2006). Curiosity and Wonder from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment.
- *Lucina Sine Concubitu: A Treatise Humbly Addressed to the Royal Society.* Edinburgh. 1885.

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Everyone has heard of Paul Revere's ride through the night to alert a sleeping countryside of the coming of the British troops. Less well known is an equally heroic ride, undertaken in 1777 by a 16-year-old farm girl.



Sybil Ludington was the eldest of Col. Henry and Abigail Ludington's 12 children. They lived in Fredericksburg, New York (now called Ludingtonville), where her father, a veteran of the French and Indian war, was a gristmill owner and commander of the area militia.

On the night of April 26, 1777, the Ludington family was getting ready for bed when they were startled by a hard knock on the door. It was a messenger from Danbury, Connecticut, who had come to request the aid of the Fredericksburg militia. Two thousand British troops had attacked that Connecticut town; the Continental Army's depot of munitions and food there was destroyed and much of the town was left in flames.

Obviously, Colonel Ludington could not personally both supervise the muster of his troops and ride to alert them. Sybil volunteered to make the ride in his place.

Authorities vary on the length of her ride; some say it was 20, some say 40, miles. In any case, it was raining hard. But as Sybil urged her bay horse, Star, onward, she could see the sky light up from the glow of the flaming town. "The British are burning Danbury--muster at Ludington's!" she shouted at the farmhouses of the militiamen. When, soaked from the rain and exhausted, she returned home, most of the 400 soldiers were ready to march.

After the Battle of Ridgefield, as the resulting skirmish was later known, Sybil was congratulated for her heroism by friends and neighbors--and by General George Washington.



Danbury Museum & Historical Society

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Phone: (203) 743-5200

Revised January 12, 2013

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October 22, 2014 9:35 AM

SKOPJE, Macedonia (AP) — Macedonia may have found its ultimate gold digger.

Police in the tiny Balkan country say a 52-year-old guard at an Orthodox Christian cemetery was detained after alleged opening graves to prize gold teeth and dentures and reselling them.

The suspect identified only by his initials, J.K., was taken in for questioning in the western city of Tetovo after police searched him outside a shopping mall and found him carrying 12 pairs of dentures, four gold tooth caps, believed to be destined for sale in neighboring Serbia.

Tetovo police spokesman Marijan Josifovski said Wednesday the man has been charged with desecrating graves, an offense that carried a jail sentence of up to one year.

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Madame POPOVA

Classification: Murderer
Characteristics: Murder-for-hire
Number of victims: 300 ?
Date of murder: 1879 - 1909
Date of arrest: March 1909
Date of birth: ????
Victim profile: Abusive husbands
Method of murder: Poisoning (arsenic)
Location: Russia
Status: Executed by firing squad in March 1909

Madame Popova (1879-1909) (age unknown) operated a murder-for-hire service in Russia that specialized in liberating married women from cruel husbands for a fee. She murdered over 300 victims, by using poison, her own hands, a weapon, or hiring an assassin. Russian police were tipped off by a liberated woman who experienced a moment of remorse.

She was executed before a firing squad.

Popova, Madame

A prolific poisoner who undertook her work as much from sympathy as for the minor fees she charged, Madame Popova was an advocate of women's liberation long before the cause was recognized.

A native of Samara, Russia, she was so distressed by the travail of peasant wives held "captive" by their brutish husbands that she volunteered an inexpensive, lethal remedy. For thirty years before her ultimate arrest, in March 1909, she ran a small disposal service for her female neighbors, picking up spare change and executing her commissions with dispatch.

A client, suddenly remorseful, turned her in to the police, and Madame Popova confessed to "liberating" some 300 wives in her career. In custody, she boasted of the fact that she "did excellent work in freeing unhappy wives from their tyrants."

In her own defense, Madame Popova told her captors she had never killed a woman. Czarist soldiers saved her from a mob that sought to burn her at the stake, and she was unrepentant as she stood before the firing squad.

Michael Newton - An Encyclopedia of Modern Serial Killers - Hunting Humans

Woman Kills 300 At Wives' Behest

Charged Small Fee for Administering Poison to Undesirable Russian Husbands - Justifies Her Killings
- Declares She Never Killed a Woman - Mob Seeks to Burn Her at the Stake, but Is Prevented -
Woman, Who Has Confessed, in Jail.

The Stanstead Journal (Rock Island, Quebec, Canada)

Jun. 24, 1909

St. Petersburg, Russia. – Arrested after a full confession has been made by one of her conscience stricken employers, a woman who is believed to have killed more than three hundred men within the last thirty years is in prison at Samara. The only name given by the police of the wholesale murderess is Popova.

All the murdered men were husbands who wanted to get rid of them. The woman charged a nominal sum prior to the murder and the remainder after the victim was killed. She would make the acquaintance of the man she was to kill and then manage to put poison in his food or drink.

After one woman whose husband had been murdered became stricken by her guilty conscience she sent for the police, made a full confession, and a squad of policemen were at once sent to the home of the Popova woman. In some way the charge against the prisoner became known, and before the police started from her home for the prison they were surrounded by a mob of several hundred persons.

Infuriated at the atrociousness of the woman's deeds, the mob demanded that the prisoner be turned over to them and that they might burn her at the stake.

With drawn revolvers the police held the mob at bay until soldiers, who had been sent for, arrived and drove the mob back. Then the woman was taken to the jail.

After she had been taken to the prison the woman made no effort to conceal the fact that she had been a wholesale murderess. She declared that she was justified in her work, for the only persons she killed were men who had abused their wives and that her murdering them had saved the women further misery.

UnknownMisandry.blogspot.com

Making It Pleasant For The Horse, 1884

A recent article by Barry Smith in the Elko Daily Free Press delves into the tall tales and hoaxes that were the hallmark of Nevada journalism in the late 19th century. Mark Twain is the best known of these Nevada journalist hoaxers. But another master of the art form was Sam Davis, creator of the apocryphal *Wabuska Mangler*, as well as inventor of a horse-raising horse cart. Smith explains:

You may have passed through Wabuska on your way from Weeks to Weed Heights without realizing this tiny hamlet once had a feisty newspaper called the Mangler.

Well, it didn't.

The Wabuska Mangler was entirely made up by Sam Davis, who was editor of The Morning Appeal in Carson City from 1879 to 1898, as a way to get outrageous opinions into the Appeal by attributing them to somebody else. The Mangler was a "wicked little sheet," Davis wrote, and its editor "a disgrace to journalism."

One of Davis's more far-reaching hoaxes was of a horse cart invented by a local blacksmith. It featured a belly-band four feet wide beneath the horse, which enabled the driver to turn a crank and raise the horse off the ground. That way, at the top of a hill, both cart and horse could coast to the bottom.

The story, fed by follow-ups in the Appeal including an illustration, spread around the country until fellow editors called his bluff.

After a little searching, I managed to track down Davis's article about this horse-lifting horse cart. It ran in papers in late 1884/early 1885. It was usually titled either "The Cart Before The Horse" or "Making It Pleasant For The Horse." The cart was said to be the creation of a blacksmith named Mr. Torreyson.

I've reproduced the text of it below. Plus, I was also able to find an illustration of the horse cart reproduced in the Pacific Rural Press, Vol 29(15), April 11, 1885.

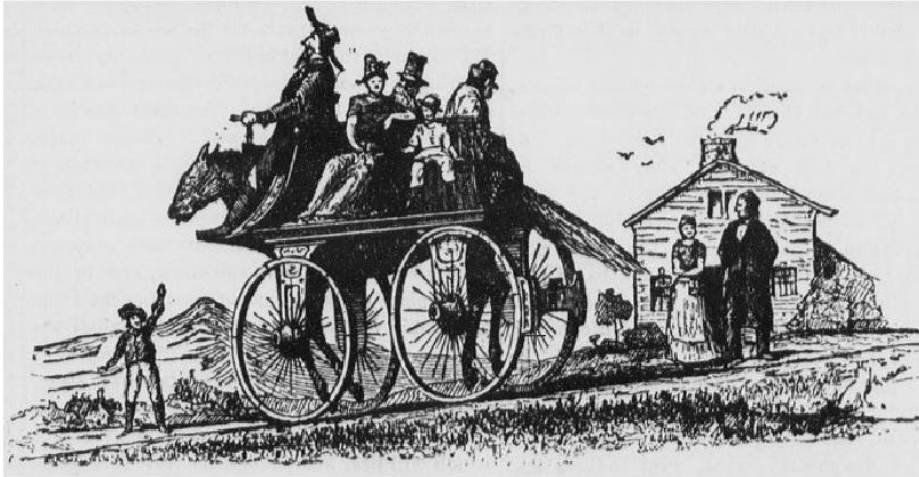
The "Bergh" mentioned in the subtitle of the article was Henry Bergh, founder of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

THE CART BEFORE THE HORSE

How a Nevada Blacksmith Out-Berghs Bergh — A Tale for Travelers

Carson Appeal

Mr. Torreyson, the blacksmith, of this city, is noted for his kindness towards animals. He has



THE CART BEFORE THE HORSE.
How a Nevada Blacksmith Out-thought
Bosch-A Tale for Travelers.
Carm. Doyle.
Mr. Torreyson, the blacksmith, of this
city, is noted for his kindred to various ani-
mals. He has just built a road cart, now
on exhibition at his blacksmith shop,
which is destined to revolutionize travel-
ing by road and to materially lighten the
labors of that noble animal, the horse.
The idea is to occasionally give the horse
a chance to ride in the cart as the
driver. The idea was first sug-
gested to Mr. Torreyson by seeing a
turtle move along the road carrying his
shell with him. The vehicle made by Mr.
Torreyson has four high wheels and the
place between them arched, so that the
horse is hitched under the wagon between
the wheels, his head projecting a little be-
yond the front wheels and his tail just
barely clearing the hind wheels. The
driver sits just over the horse's neck and
the others in the wagon face outward on
each side. The horse is so fastened that
the pulling is distributed over his body
and does not all come of his neck and
shoulders. In this position he is greatly
protected from the sun and storm and
thereby enabled to make long journeys
with less fatigue.
But the principal part of the invention
lies in a belly-band about four feet wide
passing under the horse. When you reach
the top of a long hill, down which a horse
would have to go slowly as he held back
the load, you simply turn a crank and it
lifts the horse off its feet several inches
from the ground and the vehicle then
runs down the hill of its own momentum.
It is provided with a steering apparatus
and a brake, that the vehicle may be steered
and its velocity regulated.
Several times during the day the tired
horse has a chance to ride and is very
much rested. Also when the horse at-
tempts to run away you wind up the crank
and he is lifted off the ground perfectly
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Several times during the day the tired horse has a chance to ride and is very much rested. Also when the horse attempts to run away you wind up the crank and he is lifted off the ground perfectly hopeless.

Categories: AnimalsJournalism

Posted by The Curator on Wed Oct 08, 2014

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Man with possible explosive device lodged inside his leg brought to UAB Hospital; police close down streets

By Jon Reed | jreed@al.com | Follow on Twitter on October 11, 2014 at 2:43 AM, updated October 11, 2014 at 12:02 PM

al.com



Birmingham and UAB police responded to the 1800 block of Fifth Avenue South outside the UAB Hospital emergency room Friday night, Oct. 10, 2014, when a man with an explosive device apparently lodged inside his leg was brought to the hospital. (Jon Reed/jreed@al.com)

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama -- A man was brought to UAB Hospital late Friday night with a possible explosive device inside of his leg, police say.



The incident prompted Birmingham and UAB police to close down Fifth Avenue South between 18th and 19th streets from after 11 p.m. into the early morning hours.

The man was brought to UAB from another hospital by



Regional Paramedic Services, Birmingham police Sgt. B. Shelton said.

The man had apparently been tinkering with some kind of explosive device and it



became lodged inside of his leg, Shelton said. He went to another hospital in Walker County and was then brought to Birmingham.

When he got to Birmingham,



he remained inside the ambulance outside of the emergency room. Shelton said the man was stable and talking, but that police were blocking off the area as a precaution.

The Birmingham police bomb squad and an outside consultant were brought in to deal with the device.

Shelton said the man was an older man but his age was not clear.



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[dynastylnoire](#)

October 20th 2014, 10:29:34 am · 8 hours ago



[thisonewillnotdie:](#)

Mary Jones aka Peter Sewally of New York City was put on trial June 11th 1836 for pick pocketing a wallet containing 99\$ from a white john with whom she had done business with the night before.

During their arrest Mary had attempted to throw out two additional wallets hidden in their bosom and the police upon taking Mary's key and entering their home found dozens more wallets, watches and trinkets belonging to dozens of the cities male Upperclass whom although knowing Mary had stolen from them had become fearful to report to police least their vices be known to an increasingly moral conservative public.

Upon Mary's interrogation and strip search it was discovered they were born as a man and had created a leather device in the shape and form of a vagina tied around their waist to keep clients from learning Mary's T and birth sex (Although there is some dispute that the men were well aware of her male identity that she performed in

the daytime)

On trial (in as far as I know) in the earliest known first person account of Queer life in United States Mary Jones went on record stating :

"I have been in the practice of waiting upon Girls of ill fame and made up their Beds and received the Company at the door and received the money for Rooms &c and they induced me to dress in Women's Clothes, saying I looked so much better in them and I have always attended parties among the people of my own Colour dressed in this way — and in New Orleans I always dressed in this way"

In so doing Mary Jones explained that there existed an active and known community of what would now be called gays, transsexuals, and drag queens in both the most populated city in United States and the blackest city in the United States during the pre-Emancipation era populated solely by black and mixed race people.

Of course Mary was convicted of Grand Larceny imprisoned for five years but not before being humiliated during trial and her image sensationalized by the press. Additionally days after their initial release Mary was sentenced a second time to Sing-Sing for a five month period for daring to walk about in female attire again before finally disappearing from the records.

It can be argued that this community of which Mary belonged to was the foundation of the later Black Drag Cakewalk balls known in late 19th century New York City, the queer rent parties and gay social life of 1920's Harlem and eventually the Ballroom/Vogue community formed in the 1940's to Present.

Although their life was marred in controversy caused by the multipronged discrimination so common for black gender and sexually variant people (then and now) for existing out, open and matter of factly Mary Jones was able to create a "beginning" for recorded black Queer life and history in this nation.

October 16, 2014 7:26 PM

PISMO BEACH, Calif. (AP) — A Central California beach outing has turned into a mystery after a bottle turned up with an invitation to a party in Hawaii — four years ago.

David Wilson of Nipomo says he and his family went to Shell Beach on Sunday to fish but it was too rough.

Wilson lost his sandal to a wave, but it brought him something else. While feeling for the shoe, he found a plastic bottle sealed with a cork. Inside was a tattered piece of paper dated 2010 from Maui. It appears to be a hand-written invitation to a birthday party from a little girl named Safina. Her mother's name is Kim and their last name may be Woodstocker.

KEYT-TV (<http://bit.ly/1zduDWN>) says there were phone numbers on the paper but they've been disconnected.

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Tom Voigt knows absolutely everything about the Zodiac Killer, the real-life murderer featured in the movie *Zodiac*. Neither cop nor crackpot, Voigt is certain that he's amassed almost enough evidence to solve the decades-old case very soon.

Voigt runs the popular website ZodiacKiller.com — an online destination for amateur sleuths who are fascinated

by the bizarre murders that terrorized the Bay Area in the late 1960s and 1970s. Stop by, click through the evidence (those angry, taunting letters! Those creepy ciphers!), parse the many "Whodunnit" theories, and before you know it, you'll be hooked into the mystery too.

Voigt, a web designer, lives in Portland, Ore., but he makes trips back to the Zodiac's stomping grounds to further his work on the case, as well as lead occasional tours of crime scenes and related locations (like the very mailbox where the killer was known to drop publicity-seeking missives to the *San Francisco Chronicle* and other media outlets).

It's been 45 years since the Zodiac — clad, nightmarishly, in a homemade executioner's hood — stalked a young couple on the banks of NorCal's Lake Berryessa in what was probably his most famous crime. But Voigt believes the killer's identity will soon be revealed.



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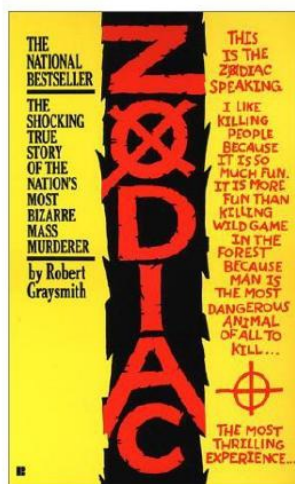
io9: How did you become interested in the Zodiac Killer?

Tom Voigt: When I was born, my parents were living in Southern California. My father was a newspaper man, and my earliest memories were of my dad coming home and turning on the black-and-white TV, and I remember all these crazy stories from the late 1960s. Not just Zodiac, but the Manson Family, all the anti-war protests, the Watts riots, and so forth. I remember the TV being really scary! We eventually moved out of the Los Angeles area to Oregon, because the Mansons had scared my mom so badly. But then we got to Oregon and it was Bigfoot, D.B. Cooper, Ted Bundy. That's the atmosphere I grew up in.

When I was in my late 20s, I saw a Zodiac Killer reenactment on *Unsolved Mysteries*. I remembered that name from when I was a little kid, and I was really surprised that the guy was still at large. Some time later, I bought a paperback book about the case to take on a road trip, and [I soon] became hooked on the case.

Was it the Robert Graysmith book?

Yeah, the first Graysmith book. It made me realize there were quite a few things about the case that made me believe it could be solved. I had never been on the Internet at that point, but I knew about it, and I thought, "That's the way to solve the case!" With a website, anybody in the world can get to it. You could get tips from all around the world. You could put up all the Zodiac letters and codes up, so everyone can read them, and maybe somebody, somewhere would see one of the unsolved codes and solve it. It seemed like a no-brainer, so I taught myself how to build a website. That's how compelled I was with it. I started Zodiackiller.com on March 20, 1998 — before Facebook, before Google, before YouTube.



How has it grown and changed over the years? Has the crowdsourcing approach yielded any solid tips or leads?

It's grown every year. It's hundreds of thousands of pages, as far as how many pages of data are available to people online. As far as activity, in terms of hits, the highest monthly total was more than 37 million. That was in March 2007, when the big-budget *Zodiac* movie opened. My site was so overwhelmed that it stopped being able to count how many hits there were halfway through the month! So who knows how many it really ended up with.

The most important thing about the site is that it's like a funnel. People send me information every day: tips and so forth about who they think the Zodiac is, or what they think he was trying to accomplish. Also, people who think they've solved the codes. I get all this data, and I filter through it. I can spot really easily what's garbage, and I can also spot what's good information. I have really good sources that I've developed over the years within law enforcement, and I can pass that information along to them.

It's really interesting to hear people contact me that say they went to one of the original detectives — or one of the current detectives — and they're told, "Go to Tom Voigt at ZodiacKiller.com." It's pretty cool that the site is so well-respected from people within law enforcement, and it's actually recommended by them.

You mentioned David Fincher's *Zodiac*, which introduced a whole new generation to the case. What did you think of the movie?

A vast majority was factually inaccurate. It would take a ten-hour phone call to list every little detail!

Was there one inaccuracy that particularly stood out?

Well, every time there's a scene where Jake Gyllenhaal [as Robert Graysmith] takes credit for a piece of information that I actually found out and shared with [the real] Robert Graysmith 20 years after this movie was supposedly taking place. [Laughs.] There were all these scenes set in 1970 where Graysmith was learning some new tidbit about [suspect] Arthur Leigh Allen,

when actually it was a tidbit learned by me and passed on to Graysmith. So that was annoying.



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But, I didn't really expect it to be accurate. I saw some early photographs [from the set] of the Graysmith and Paul Avery, played by Robert Downey Jr., characters, together. They never actually interacted during the time they worked at the *Chronicle*. I've interviewed both Graysmith and Avery extensively and they didn't sit next to each other or talk to each other [like Gyllenhaal and Downey do in the movie].

In fact, the first time they met was after Graysmith had left the *Chronicle*. [Laughs.]

But the film got the word out [about the case] to a lot of people, and the first two-thirds of it I actually really enjoyed. But the last third was pretty painful.

Did you read the latest book on the case which came out earlier this year, *The Most Dangerous Animal of All*, written by a man who was convinced that his father was the Zodiac?

That was debunked within about three days. The biggest piece of so-called evidence that's presented in the book is an alleged handwriting match between the suspect and the Zodiac. And it turned out that the suspect's handwriting samples came from a marriage certificate. I have a really great team of researchers that follow the case through my website, and in the discussion forum, it took about three days for them to obtain handwriting samples from the reverend who performed the marriage. That handwriting matched the handwriting on the certificate. So it wasn't even written by the suspect! That was pretty damn funny, but it was good publicity for about two weeks.

What's your favorite theory as to the Zodiac's identity?

With everything I know about the case, I believe the Zodiac is Richard Gaikowski. He was a San Francisco artist. There are a million and one things that point to him, but the most damning bit of information is simply the way the original three-part code [mailed in separate segments by the killer in 1969] was solved.

You can see Gaikowski's nickname, G-Y-K-E. When the cipher is solved using a key, it turns out that GYKE is actually the last four letters of the word "because," in the phrase "I will not give you my name because you will try to stop me from killing." All three syllables of his name are given [across the three ciphers], but the GYKE portion was only included with the letter in which Zodiac wrote "In this code is my identity."

It sounds complicated, but I have visuals on the site that explain it. It's really stunning, and the odds of that being random, with all the other coincidences about Gaikowski ... I just think the

This is the Zodiac speaking
By the way have you cracked
the last cipher I sent you?
My name is —

A E N ☼ ☉ K ☉ M ☉ J N A M

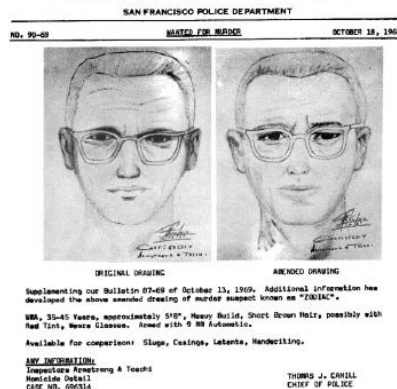
I am mildly cerous as to how
much money you have on my
head now. I hope you do not
think that I was the one
who wiped out that blue
meannie with a bomb at the
cop station. Even though I talked
about killing school children with
one. It just wouldn't do to
move in on someone else's territory.
But there is more glory in killing
a cop than a kid because a cop
can shoot back. I have killed
ten people so far. I would
have been a lot more except
that my bar bomb was a dud.
I was swamped out by the
rain we had a while back.

odds are against it.

Is the case still open?

Oh, theoretically. But based on the emails I get, people are really frustrated with San Francisco police. There's nobody that really takes the tips or calls people back. I've always said that if the Zodiac called the SFPD to turn himself in, they'd put him on hold for so long he'd die of old age before they could prosecute him.

WANTED



Do you think it will ever be solved?

I believe it will be solved sooner than later. I think there's crucial evidence and crucial informants. I think there's people out there who know what happened, they know the whole story, but they don't really want to come forward because they don't want the notoriety. Maybe in a way they're worried about being prosecuted for

not coming forward sooner.

So I tried to get a reward fund going. I felt like people are old enough now that they're starting to worry about medical problems. Maybe they want to take care of their kids or grandkids, and so they're willing to deal with whatever they were worried about in the first place, for enough money. So I wanted to raise a reward of six figures; I fell short, but I'll try again. I think that's the way to go. I think there's somebody out there who knows who the Zodiac was and can prove it, but they're not motivated to come forward.

By FIRE SLAVES BY KNIFE
PAR DICE
GUN ROPE



Do you ever encounter people who wonder why you're so involved in the Zodiac case?

All it takes is for me to explain to people that it's not a glorification site about some known killer. I mean, what's the point of, like, a Ted Bundy website? He was caught and a Wikipedia page is enough. So once people realize that the Zodiac is not my hero, and that we're trying to help catch the guy, and it's actually working out pretty well, then they think it's really cool.

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The Mystery of the Min Min Light

By BILL BEATTY

ONE of Australia's most remarkable ghostly manifestations is the strange wandering light that appears at indefinite periods at Min Min, near Boulia, in western Queensland. Known locally as the "ghost light," it is a moon of light suspended in space, darting hither and thither, vanishing ghost-like in the dark recesses of the trees.



THE locality in which it appears happens to have been the site of a notorious shanty which was known as the Min Min Hotel.

No spots on earth were lower than some of these western shanties of the Queensland of 70 odd years ago. The Min Min Hotel was regarded as the worst of these vicious dens. It stood beside the road to Warenda, and other outlying stations, towards the border of Central Australia.

Dispensing adulterated liquor and drugs, the Min Min Hotel derived its profits from the process known as "lamming down" unwary shearers and station-hands, who arrived there with large cheques and still larger thirsts.

Many of these men remained there. The fierce, doped spirits caused their deaths. Others were killed in wild brawls, or were murdered for their money, and at the rear of the hotel

site there is still to be seen the Min Min graveyard, where these victims were buried. It is nearly 70 years since the hotel was destroyed by fire.

Shortly after the fire a stockman rode wildly one night to the police station. He was greatly agitated, and it was some minutes before he could pull himself together. After the sergeant had given him a glass of water, he told his story:

"You won't believe me, but it's true—I swear it's the gospel truth! About 10 o'clock this evening I was riding not far from the Min Min graveyard when all of a sudden I saw

riding not far from the Min Min graveyard when all of a sudden I saw a strange glow appear right in the middle of the cemetery. I looked at it amazed. The glow got bigger, till it was about the size of a water-melon. I couldn't believe my eyes as I saw it hovering over the ground. And then I broke into a cold sweat, for it started to come towards me.

"It was too much for my nerves. I was terror-stricken. I dug the spurs into the horse and headed towards Boulia as fast as I could. But every time I looked back over my shoulder

I could see the light following me! It only disappeared when I got to the outskirts of the town.

"Don't smile, sergeant! Can't you see it's the truth I'm telling you?"

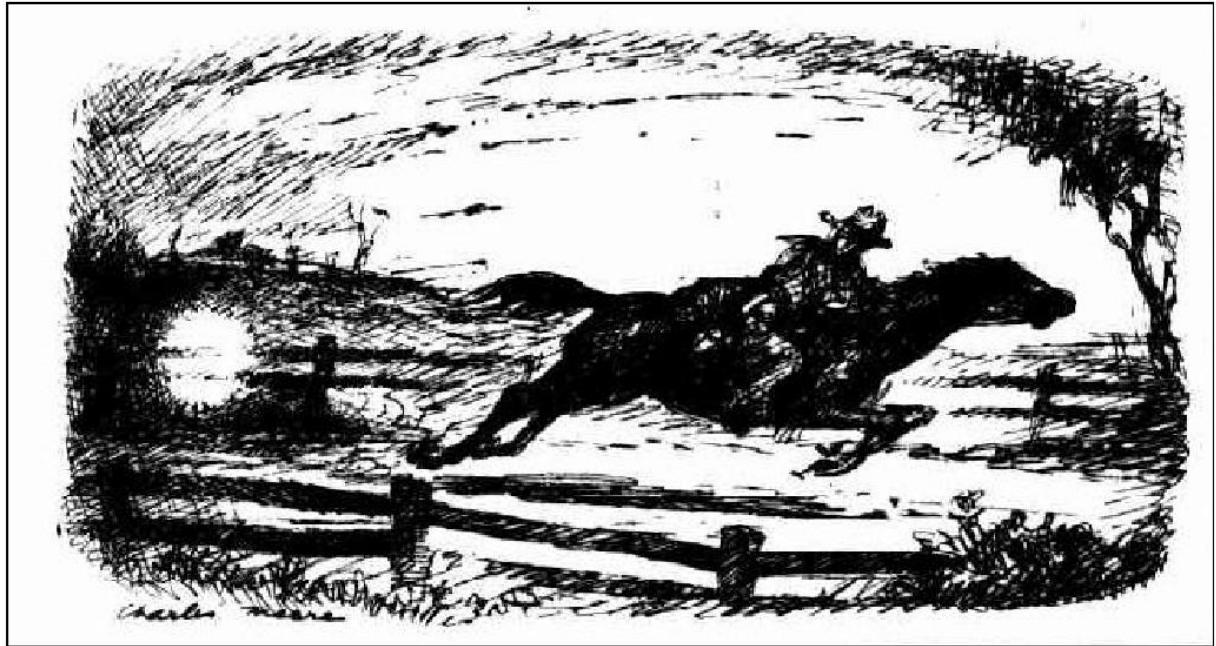
But the police made light of the stockman's story, and the whole town ragged the unfortunate man about the spook he had seen.

Then came report after report that substantiated the story. To-day the phenomenon is an established fact. Thousands of people have seen the Min Min light. Many scientists have gone to Boulia in the hope of solving the mystery, but have been completely baffled by it.



TRUE, it has some features in common with the will-o'-the-wisp, that curious light seen in marshland and church graveyards in northern Europe. But there are vital points of difference between the will-o'-the-wisp and the Min Min light. The former is produced from decaying animal matter in churchyards or marshes, whereas the Australian light not only shines above a graveyard but moves about over hard, rocky plain country totally unlike European marshlands.

The riddle remains unsolved.



Teenagers' long ago joyrides to Monk's Castle and the Albino Village by Anthony Buccino

Posted: 2008, last update 09/28/2014

anthonysworld.com

And the only time we ever heard about somebody who went to Albino Village was when they came back and told us about how scared they were and how lucky to get out before they were grabbed by the Albino people.

We passed a new milestone in my household when school started this month. It feels more like a millstone around my neck as I think of the tremendous change in lifestyle it will encompass.

The high school where my 15-year-old is a sophomore has decided to take away her health class and, lo and behold, give her driver's education classes for a semester.



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As the father of a little girl who has not missed a day of school in about nine years, I must protest that she continue with health classes and stay as far as possible from any class involving driving the family automobile.

All right, so her driver's education class does not involve actually getting behind the wheel of an actual automobile. The mere thought of my child, the little red-haired tot I once held in one hand, driving a car is more than enough to turn the rest of my hair gray.

She has relayed that if she passes the written test in her driver's education class, she can use it to waive her written test at Motor Vehicle Services when she applies for her driving permit.

How did it come to this? Whatever happened to that little girl who cried when I drifted off to a corner to build something with her Giant Loc-Blocks? How can that little girl possibly even think of driving a car?

I have not grown so senile that here in my 40s I cannot remember when I took driver's education classes in high school.

There seemed to be a prerequisite for all driver's ed teachers to have had a gazillion accidents. It seemed that every time they spoke of an accident, it was as if the teachers themselves had the accident.

That applied to nearly every accident the instructor discussed - including the ones where no one walked away. But driving was different when I learned to drive.

First of all, the cars were all bigger back then. Plus a lot of them had things in them called seat belts, which some of us even wore on the occasions we remembered they were there.

This, of course, I would explain to my daughter as learning to drive in the dark ages when I was a teenager in the 1970s.

"Yes, dear, we did have cars when I was in high school. . . . No, dear, it was long ago, but there were no dinosaurs around when I learned to drive . . . except for the Sinclair dinosaur. No. Never mind. There were no real dinosaurs when I learned to drive."

In the early 1970s, it was fun to drive. The speed limits were 60, 70 m.p.h. and higher on some roads. We could pile into the car and go to the drive-in restaurant, or the drive-in theater - where they showed a movie on a giant screen and you watched it from your car.

Then you could go to the food shack and pay an enormous amount of money for some lousy food - no, there were no video tapes then, or VCRs. If you wanted to see a movie without commercials, you had to go to a theater.

But I digress, as Stephen Dedalus used to say.

Driving was great in the early 1970s. You may not believe this, but gasoline was about a quarter a gallon for the expensive stuff. No, really, I'm not making that up.

We could fill the tanks of our old gas guzzlers for about eight bucks and drive all week. When we got our licenses, we'd put our money together and fill the tank and drive around and around and around and then around some more.

Sometimes we'd get together with whoever we were hanging around with at the time and take a ride to Albino Village or up to Monk's Castle.

No, they weren't night clubs. The Albino Village was a place I never actually saw. But we planned to go there a lot of times.

You see, you take this road along the river, go over a bridge then down a long road and then under a highway, and after you come out of the underpass, that was where everybody said the Albino Village was.

[Off River Road, where Nutley meets Clifton, there was a road that lead past some factories and to the Passaic River, and it was said that if you followed the road you went through an underpass {under Route 3?} and arrived at a street where the road was narrow and Albino people {actually people with grey hair} came out and watched you - like in a zombie movie or something, and it was supposed to scare you, like stories of the White Lady in Branch Brook Park, the Purple Bishop, etc.]

Everybody knew that if you went into the underpass, you had to go to the end before you

could turn around.

And the only time we ever heard about somebody who went to Albino Village was when they came back and told us about how scared they were and how lucky to get out before they were grabbed by the Albino people.

But I was at the Monk's Castle, once. I don't remember who drove, but it was probably Jerry in that great big Pontiac he drove, with Louie and Cindy and maybe Cathy and her sister Colleen and Barbara and me one day after Thanksgiving. We parked the Pontiac and headed to the abandoned building that did look like a castle.

Really, all we knew about this building was what we had heard from the other kids. Undaunted, we tarried up the hill for a closer look, passing signs that said,

Keep Out

This Means You Kids

that caused us to tarry even slower.

The dry autumn leaves crunched like church bells under our sneakered feet.

It had looked a lot bigger from far away. There was no one here, and no one to chase us away from a closer look. We returned to the car .

And that reminds me . . . the stories my driver's ed instructor told me about being on the road were not nearly as scary as really being out there driving responsibly with a load of people in the car.

What is most scary about all this driver's ed stuff is that a long time ago, Cindy and Louie got married and their son, little Louie, I guess, is probably out on the road right now heading with his friends to Albino Village or Monk's Castle but, of course, not with my daughter, who will be taking an extra semester of health classes from now until she's 30.

First published in Rambling Round- Oct. 9, 1997, in The Independent Press of Bloomfield, Worrall Community Newspapers.

Adapted from ***Rambling Round - Inside and Outside at the Same Time***

ALBINO VILLAGE - A cul de sac accessed through a brick arch tunnel that, long ago, was rumored to be home to a colony of Albinos. It was a big late-night spot and kids would go there to scare their dates. It was prominently featured in Weird NJ. The shantytown was slowly torn down in the 80's and replaced by larger duplex homes. In 2008, the whole neighborhood was torn down to make way for an expansion project for Route 3.

Kip's Castle - aka *Monk's Castle* - Originally known as "Kypsburg" was constructed over a three-year period from 1902 through 1905 by Frederic Ellsworth Kip and his

wife, Charlotte Bishop Williams Kip. Frederic was a wealthy textile inventor and industrialist who also published several books related to U.S. tariff laws. Charlotte is credited for the design of the "Kypsburg" building and ground, cultivating a renowned octagonal rose garden in the southwest corner of the property. The site is a facility of the Historic Essex County Park System.

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Mother Featherlegs

So said to be the only U.S. Monument to be given to a prostitute, Mother Featherlegs was a confidant, rough on the edges, and named for favoring the red ruffled underwear that made her legs resemble 'featherlegs'. Every year during the Legend of Rawhide she is reenacted and the only woman to be riding a horse not side saddle while wearing the famous red pantaloons. And her red pantaloons can be found in the Lusk Museum as she was not remembered for being a prostitute but instead for the confidant and loyal person she was outside of that.

Charlotte Shepard:

Said to be the only monument in the nation established in the name of a prostitute or 'soiled dove' Mother Featherlegs was known for far more than that.

In Historical Lusk:

It is true that she was a 'soiled dove' and while Mother Featherlegs operated on the outskirts of the law, she was also a loyal, hardworking, profitable entrepreneur.



grave site of Mother Featherlegs; placed where her cabin once resided

Operating out of her home (which was located at the base of the Rawhide Buttes) Mother Featherlegs' establishment was frequented by rustabouts of the law; outlaws that were said to have planned various robberies-- including train and stage-- from the comfort of her cabin. After which [the robberies], Mother Featherlegs was often entrusted with the loot (valuables, money, jewels, etc.) until the robbers could return for it.



Mother Featherlegs gravestone

Born Charlotte Shepard, she lived an outlaw's life even before coming to Wyoming. In Louisiana she ran with a cutt-throat gang to which both of her sons, Tom and Bill, also belonged. It was here she met Dangerous Dick Davis or 'The Terrapin' as he was known in Louisiana. Given time, almost all of the members of the gang were killed and after she lost both of her boys she came to Wyoming with Dangerous Dick at her side. Here she would not only build her establishment but she would also be christened with the 'Mother Featherlegs' nickname. Giving preference to a pair of red pantaloons she liked to wear, she was told that they made her legs look like chicken legs and that was how her nickname came about. While in Wyoming she was never known as Charlotte Shepard.

Mother Featherlegs set up house with Dangerous Dick Davis where she also ran the house as he didn't do much but sit around. She would only come to live in Wyoming for three years before her body would be found by a visiting neighbor. Dangerous Dick Davis had murdered her for the jewels that she housed for robbers and fled back to Louisiana.

Years later Dangerous Dick was caught-- while still in Louisiana-- and hung for her murder. During that time he confessed to having killed her and that her true name was in fact Charlotte Shepard.



pictures from the Niobrara County Library collection

In 1964 a monument was erected in honor of Mother Featherlegs and is housed at the site of her home. Among contributors for the monument were Jim Griffith, Bob Arrow, and Del Burke who as a major contributor, a 'soiled dove' herself she owned/operated the Yellow Hotel in Lusk. This monument can still be visited today. Her grave stone is as reads below:

Here lies Mother Featherlegs.

So called, as in her ruffled pantalettes she looked like a feather-legged chicken in a high wind.

She was a roadhouse ma'am

An outlaw confederate

She was murdered by Dangerous Dick Davis 'The Terapin' in 1879.

And what of the red pantaloons that earned Mother Featherlegs her name? Originally they were housed at the site of the memorial until they were stolen and placed in a Deadwood saloon for almost three decades. After being stolen back they were placed in the Stagecoach Museum on Main Street in Lusk. This museum-- and Mother Featherlegs pantaloons-- can still be visited today.

Every year during the Legend of Rawhide pageant Mother Featherlegs is portrayed, wearing the famous red pantaloons and the only woman on the wagon train to not be riding side saddle.

Town of Lusk PO Box 390 Lusk, WY 82225 Phone: (307) 334-3612 Fax: (307) 334-2154 Email: office@townoflusk.org

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Girls of the Gulch

Originally published in the March/April 1997 edition of Deadwood Magazine.

Historians disagree about the color of her underwear. Some say red; some say white. Whatever the color, there's no dispute about the fact she acquired her nickname from her lace-trimmed drawers.

While genteel ladies of that era daintily rode sidesaddle, the red-haired strumpet tucked her skirts into her pantalets and galloped across the windy Wyoming prairie "a la clothes pin."

Seeing her riding astride, tiers of lace ruffles fluttering in the breeze, a cowboy made the laconic remark, "Them ruffled drawers make the old girl look like a feather-legged chicken in a high wind."

Forever after known as Ol' Mother Featherlegs, she arrived in Wyoming in 1876 and promptly established a bawdyhouse on the Cheyenne-Black Hills trail.

Actually, it wasn't much of a house. Just a dugout near a stream where she supplied cheap whiskey, gambling and sex, commodities in short supply in the isolated Rawhide Buttes area south of present day Lusk.

Her place soon became a refuge for outlaws preying on travelers along the stage route. Acting as a go-between for the road agents, Mother Featherlegs was entrusted with large sums of money and jewelry until the bandits could safely dispose of the stolen booty.

She had a live-in companion who claimed to be hunting and trapping for a living, but spent most of his time loafing around Mother Featherlegs' shack. "Dangerous Dick" seemed to be well acquainted with the middle-aged madam.

The only other woman living in that isolated area was the wife of a Silver Springs horse rancher, Mrs. O. J. Demmon. One summer afternoon in 1879, the lonesome ranch wife gave into a yearning for conversation with another female, no matter what her social station. She hitched up a team to travel the few miles to Mother Featherlegs' place.

Much to her distress, Mrs. Demmon found her neighbor's body lying beside a spring. Mother Featherlegs had apparently been dead for two or three days, murdered while filling a bucket of water. Tracks around the spring were made by moccasins like those commonly worn by Dangerous Dick, who had apparently skipped the country with the old woman's cache of money and jewelry.

Her identity still a mystery, Mother Featherlegs was quietly buried on the spot.

Davis returned to his old haunts and criminal activity in the swamps of Louisiana, where he was captured and charged with murder and robbery a few years later. Before he was

lynched, Davis confessed to killing Mother Featherlegs and revealed that her name was actually Mrs. Charlotte Shepard.

According to Davis, "Ma'am" Shepard was one of a gang of cutthroats that operated in the swamps of northern Louisiana after the Civil War. Eventually all the gang members and hunted down and eliminated, except for Mrs. Shepard and Davis, known in Louisiana as "The Terrapin." Ma'am Shepard fled north to a healthier climate after her sons, Tom and Bill, were honored guests at a vigilante necktie party.

Two curious schoolboys added a postscript to the Mother Featherlegs saga. Russell Thorp, Jr. later described their youthful escapade.

A school mate and myself spent a vacation in and around Rawhide and Muskrat Canyon and like the fool things kids sometimes undertake, we decided to dig up the remains of Mother Featherlegs. So we camped nearby and proceeded to do this job at night. It was a beautiful moonlight night. This was, as I recall, about the summer of 1893 – 14 years after her death. When we removed the lid of this homemade pine coffin, her features were clearly recognizable, with a great mass of red hair. We hastily nailed the lid back down. After all those years the body had more the appearance of being slightly mummified, and the coffin was not rotted.

The story might have ended there except for the efforts of Wyoming promoters

Jim Griffith and Bob Arrow, who concocted the idea of a monument and dedication ceremony for Mother Featherlegs, in conjunction with a 1964 reenactment of the Denver to Deadwood stage run.

On May 17, 1964, former Deadwood Police Chief Lee Karas drove the historic stagecoach up the old Cheyenne-Black Hills trail to the gravesite in the sagebrush and cactus-covered back pastures of Rawhide. A crowd of several hundred people watched as the 3,500-pound, red granite marker was dedicated to the memory of one of the most colorful characters of the Old West.

To cover costs of the dedication ceremony and monument, Griffith and Arrow solicited donations from the Lusk community. One of the major contributors was another madam, Del Burke, whose Yellow Hotel brothel in Lusk was still in operation at that time. (Professional courtesy, perhaps?)

Before unveiling the monument, Russell Thorp, Jr., the same man who had disinterred the grave when a schoolboy, remarked, "I do not know what epitaph is on this stone for I was not asked to write it, but if I had written it I would have said:

Here lies dear old Charlotte,

born a virgin she died a harlot,

but for fourteen years she kept her virginity

and that's a damn good record

for this vicinity.

The pantalets draped across the stone during the dedication ceremonies disappeared with the stagecoach.

In 1990, determined to retrieve the historic undergarments, a group of spirited Wyoming citizens, armed with a proclamation from the governor, descended upon Deadwood's Saloon No. 10. In the role of Mother Featherlegs, EvaLou Paris demanded the return of her drawers, forcibly removing them from the saloon girl who was wearing them.

The well-traveled pantalets of the notorious Mother Featherlegs – or a reasonable facsimile thereof – are now on display at the Stagecoach Museum in Lusk, Wyoming.

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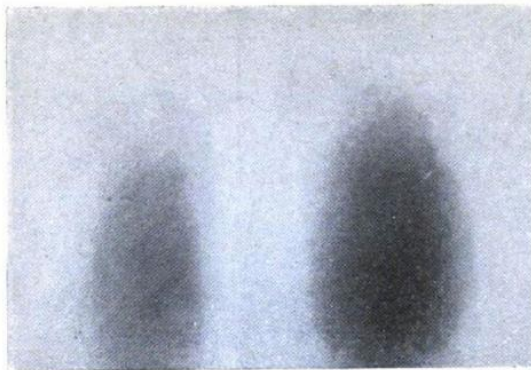


FIG. 6.

Without "N" rays.

With "N" rays proceeding from a Nernst lamp.

jj

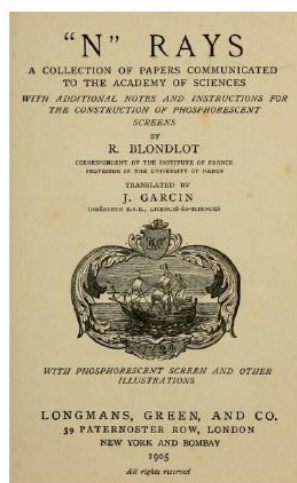
In the winter of 1903, just eight years after the monumental discovery of X-rays, a French scientist by the name of René Blondlot stumbled upon a brand new form of radiation. He called them N-rays, after his town of Nancy, perhaps because naming them R-rays after himself would have been both unwieldy and self-absorbed.

Blondlot had been experimenting with X-rays to see if they were in fact waves or a stream of particles, Paul Collins writes in *Banvard's Folly: 13 Tales of People Who Didn't Change the World*. Firing X-rays through a charged electric

field, Blondlot expected that if they were waves, the field would shift their path into a detector off to the side and brighten an electric spark within. "And that's just what they did," Collins writes. "Blondlot proved, quite correctly, that X-rays are actually waves."

Next he fired X-rays through a quartz prism, which already had been shown to *not* reflect such radiation. Problem is, out of the corner of his eye, Blondlot noticed that the electric spark in the detector got brighter like X-rays actually had been deflected into it. Except they couldn't possibly have been. So Blondlot leapt to a bit of a conclusion that he had discovered something entirely different: N-rays. It was a leap that would prove to be the end of his reputation.

At first, though, his discovery caused a sensation. It didn't hurt that the scientific community was at the time a bit gaga over radiation, according to Collins. We'd known about X-rays for less than a decade, and the discovery of radio waves and gamma rays soon followed. Huzzah, then, for Blondlot's discovery of N-rays!



And all the better for the buzz that this form of radiation was curious indeed. "They'd pass straight through materials that would block visible light—wood, aluminum, black paper," notes Collins. "On the other hand, some materials that visible light could pass through, like water and rock salt, proved impenetrable to N-rays." The scientific community had a mystery on its hands.

The sun seemed to emit the rays, but only until clouds passed over, Blondlot claimed. And anything that basked in the sun's light, including you and me, would absorb N-rays like we would UV radiation. "Sea water and the stones exposed to solar radiation store up N-rays which they afterwards restore," he wrote. "Possibly these phenomena play

ii some hitherto unperceived part in certain terrestrial phenomena. Perhaps, also, N-rays are not without influence on certain phenomena of animal and vegetable life." What phenomena these may be, Blondlot was mum.

Since his initial discovery, Blondlot had graduated from observing the spark of a detector to using phosphorescent screens that lit up, however faintly, when bombarded with N-rays. And he insisted that those scientists interested in replicating his experiment follow his procedures exactly, shutting themselves in a darkened room and allowing their eyes to acclimate for a half hour.

And don't even dare think about watching the screens head-on. No, you must see them out of the corner of your eye. Some observers will pick it up just fine, but "for others," Blondlot warned, "these phenomena lie almost at the limit of what they are able to discern, and it is only after a certain amount of practice that they succeed in catching them easily, and in observing them with complete certainty."



To make things easier for those struggling to replicate Blondlot's tests (and there were many such scientists), he claimed that when N-rays bombard phosphorescent screens that had previously been exposed to light, "the phosphorescent glow is observed to increase in a very marked fashion.... Of all the actions producing N-rays, this is the one which is most easily observed. The experiment is an easy one to set up and to repeat."

ii But if this experiment is sounding rather subjective to you, you would have been right in league with any number of scientists trying to replicate Blondlot's results. They couldn't do it. Well, except the French, it seemed, including a scientist named Augustin Charpentier, who made a rather startling discovery: Our bodies, like the sun, *emit* N-rays, especially when we're getting our pump on. "Stand behind a big enough phosphorescent screen in a dark room and flex your arms," Collins recaps, "and a faint outline of your body would appear, with slightly brighter spots around your biceps and the Broca's Area of the brain."

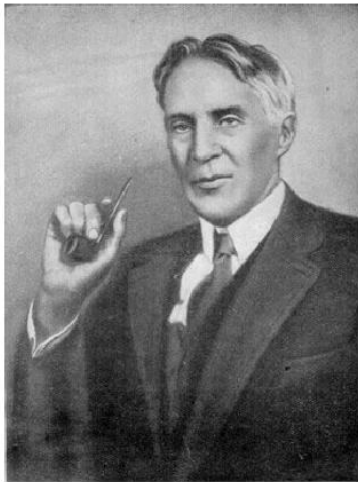
But wait, there's more. Not only were N-rays a pretty sweet party trick, they were also really good for you. Charpentier started firing the rays at human test subjects, not to mention dogs and frogs. N-rays beamed at the tongue and ears and nose or even frontal lobe would supercharge your senses, he claimed. Whether any of the subjects turned into superheroes, though, is lost to history.

Ray Banned

A whole lot of scientists that didn't happen to be blessed with a lovely French accent hadn't the slightest clue what Blondlot was seeing, and were more than slightly skeptical of the supposed health benefits of N-rays. One Canadian physicist wondered how Blondlot could take such precise measurements "with a radiation so feeble that no one outside of France has been able to detect at all." Adds Collins: "Others wondered aloud whether France was in

the grip of a spell of self-hypnosis."

So the skeptics sent in the cavalry. Well, they sent a guy named Robert W. Wood, "a mischievous fellow," according to Collins, who'd once taken a joyride on the as-yet-unfinished Trans-Siberian Railway. When he arrived in Blondlot's lab, he was treated to a demonstration of N-rays illuminating the luminescent paint on a card, which he of course could not perceive.



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Then Wood devised a test of his own: "I asked [Blondlot] if I could move an opaque lead screen in and out of the path of the rays while he called out the fluctuations of the screen," according to a 1941 biography of the scientist. "He was almost 100 percent wrong and called out fluctuations when I had made no movement at all, and that proved a lot, but I held my tongue."

Next Blondlot demonstrated an N-ray spectroscope, which used an aluminum prism to split the rays into distinct and measurable wavelengths. In a dark room, Blondlot read off the spectroscope's measurements of N-rays. Then Wood asked him to repeat his numbers a second time before reaching into the spectroscope and removing the prism. Yet Blondlot read the exact same numbers as before. That, of course, was problematic both for the experiment and for Blondlot's career. Wood wrote to the journal *Nature* of his coup, and with that, the theory of N-rays came tumbling down.

Let this serve as a lesson: Be wary of men who forbid you from looking at something straight-on. Not that he was intentionally trying to pull the wool over our eyes, as it were, but Blondlot's insistence that the observer only view the luminous effects of N-rays with their peripheral vision guaranteed all kinds of error. It already was known in Blondlot's time that this perspective produces strange effects on our vision, according to Collins, who cites the experiences of one astronomer: "It is a curious circumstance, that when we wish to obtain a sight of a very faint star, such as one of the satellites of Saturn, we can see it most distinctly by looking away from it, and when the eye is turned full upon it, it immediately disappears." N-rays were Blondlot's Saturnian moons.

And they ruined him. His friends say the shock even drove him mad. He retired three years after Wood's disclosure and all but disappeared from the scientific community, which had been left understandably stunned. It was an embarrassment, sure, but also one of history's more conspicuous triumphs of the scientific method: Experiments demand replication. Pick a good fight, and history may remember you for the right reasons instead of the wrong ones.

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The Theft of Napoleon's Arabs



This story was recorded in The Cavalry Journal of the British Army in April 1924.

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Major Schill, a celebrated German Legion Cavalry Officer, in 1807 took from Napoleon several beautiful Arabian horses, which had been presented to him by the Sultan. Enraged at this loss, the Emperor set a price of 100 napoleons on Schill's head. The latter gave himself little concern about the menaces of the French Emperor, on whose head he, in his turn, set a price, and, to show how little he valued him, the sum offered was a very small one.

Napoleon was very fond of these horses and sent to demand them from Schill, at the same time promising to pay him 4,000 crowns in gold or whatever sum they might be worth. His letter was addressed: "*Au Capitaine des Brigands, Schill.*" (To the Captain of the Brigands, Schill.)

Schill's answer to him was as follows: "*Dear Brother, I am more than pleased at having taken seven of your horses, as I see by your letter that you put so great a value on them, but I cannot accept the 4,000 crowns in gold. I am not in any want of money and should the occasion arise I can always find sufficient in the military chests of the French Army, which I am sure to take. If, however, instead of this you will replace the four horses which you stole from the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, you shall have those which I have taken from you without further payment.*"

This letter was addressed as follows: "*Au Colonel de tous les Brigands, mon honorable frère Napoléon.*" (To the Colonel of all the Brigands, my honourable brother Napoleon.)

No, Bram Stoker Did Not Model Dracula On Vlad The Impaler

40

Lauren Davis

Filed to: daily explainer

10/21/14 11:00am

It's one of those so-called facts that everyone knows: Bram Stoker's character Count Dracula was loosely based on Vlad the Impaler. But while there's no doubt that Stoker took the name from Vlad III's patronymic, it's doubtful that the Impaler was actually the basis for the famous vampire.

Who Made The Vlad-Dracula Connection?

It certainly makes sense that scholars and other readers have connected Count Dracula with the Wallachian warlord Vlad III, nicknamed "Vlad Tepes" or, in English, "Vlad the Impaler." After all, Vlad III was a member of the House of Drăculești, and is one of a handful of historical figures whose title is rendered as "Voivode Dracula" in English-language texts. And the fictional Dracula does share one key biographical detail with his historical namesake: they both fought against the Turks during their mortal lives. But how did these two connections turn Vlad III into the supposed basis for Count Dracula?

Stoker's son, Irving Stoker, said that his father claimed *Dracula* had its genesis "in a nightmarish dream after eating too much dressed crab." After all, the best gothic novels were supposed to come from nightmares—just look at *Frankenstein*. Wherever Stoker got the initial idea to write a vampire story, *Dracula* was the product of a great deal of research and imagination.



Expand

For a long time, that research process was shrouded in mystery. Florence Stoker sold her husband's working notes for *Dracula* after his death in 1912, and they were lost to scholarly view until 1972, when *Dracula* scholars Raymond McNally and Radu Florescu discovered them in the Rosenbach Museum & Library in Philadelphia. This means that, for decades, much of Stoker's writing process was left to speculation. And it was in that speculation that Vlad III morphed from Count Dracula's possible namesake to the character's full-fledged inspiration.

Dracula scholar Elizabeth Miller's book *Dracula: Sense and Nonsense* provides a fascinating history of *Dracula* scholarship as Miller debunks many of theories and misconceptions about the work that have since become accepted "fact." The

tone of the book is exasperated, but that in no way detracts from Miller's careful parsing of fact and speculation. Miller notes that the notion of Vlad III as the model for Count Dracula emerged in 1958, with Basil Kirtley, who asserted that, without question, the biography that Abraham Van Helsing gives for the fictional Count Dracula is that of the Wallachian voivode. Similar claims are echoed by Maurice Richardson, Harry Ludlam, and Grigore Nandris.

But the book that popularized the Vlad-Dracula link is McNally and Florescu's 1972 *In Search of Dracula*, which they wrote and published before their discovery of Stoker's notes. It's telling that, years later, both McNally and Florescu eventually stepped back from their one-time claim that Vlad III and his supposed atrocities actually inspired the wicked Count. So how did this all happen in the first place?

In the absence of Stoker's notes, scholars sometimes invented their own scenarios for how Stoker chose Dracula as the name of his vampiric villain. One popular theory surrounded Arminius Vambery, a Hungarian professor with whom Stoker was acquainted. In April 1890, Stoker and his friend and co-worker, the actor Henry Irving, dined with Vambery after a performance of "The Dead Heart." (Stoker was the business manager at the Lyceum Theater, which Irving owned.) Many have imagined that this dinner involved Vambery regaling Stoker and Irving with tales of Vlad Tepes and his atrocities, and that these tales set Stoker's imagination aflame.

Vambery actually makes an appearance of sorts in *Dracula*. Stoker was fond of including the names of friends and acquaintances in his works, and when Abraham Van Helsing speaks of Count Dracula's origins, he mentions a Hungarian professor named Arminius:

"Thus when we find the habitation of this man-that-was, we can confine him to his coffin and destroy him, if we obey what we know. But he is clever. I have asked my friend Arminius, of Buda-Pesth University, to make his record; and, from all the means that are, he tell me of what he has been. He must, indeed, have been that Voivode Dracula who won his name against the Turk, over the great river on the very frontier of Turkey-land. If it be so, then was he no common man; for in that time, and for centuries after, he was spoken of as the cleverest and the most cunning, as well as the bravest of the sons of the 'land beyond the forest.' That mighty brain and that iron resolution went with him to his grave, and are even now arrayed against us. The Draculas were, says Arminius, a great and noble race, though now and again were scions who were held by their coevals to have had dealings with the Evil One. They learned his secrets in the Scholomance, amongst the mountains over Lake Hermanstadt, where the devil claims the tenth scholar as his due. In the records are such words as 'stregoica'—witch, 'ordog,' and 'pokol'—Satan and hell; and in one manuscript this very Dracula is spoken of as 'wampyr,' which we all understand too well. There have been from the loins of this very one great men and good women, and their graves make sacred the earth where alone this foulness can dwell. For it is not the least of its terrors that this evil thing is rooted deep in all good; in soil barren of holy memories it cannot rest."

Some scholars have taken this to mean that Stoker learned from the real Arminius Vambery

what Van Helsing learned from his friend Arminius. The truth is, we don't know what transpired at that dinner, nor do we know if Stoker and Vambéry ever corresponded.

Another piece of speculation surrounds the British Museum, which at the time, had four pamphlets that contained information on Vlad III, but there is no evidence that Stoker actually read any of them.

And then there is Vlad III himself. After all, wouldn't a figure known as "the Impaler" make a perfect vampire? The number of movies that treat the life of Vlad Tepes as Dracula's backstory are an indication of just how neatly the historical warlord and the fictional vampire fit together in some people's minds. Some scholars have argued, quite bizarrely, that the absence of pertinent details from Vlad Tepes' life and legends in the text of *Dracula* is somehow evidence of Stoker's knowledge of the tales and his desire to explicitly fictionalize them.

But what about the impaling? It was already a common to stake vampires in folklore and contemporary literature. The fact that beheading is given as a method of killing vampires when Vlad III himself was beheaded after falling in battle? That particular vampire-killing method appears in a book of Transylvanian superstitions that we know Stoker read. The fact that Vlad III was born in Transylvania? Transylvania was a popular exotic locale in Gothic fiction. (Anyway, why would Stoker base his character on a Wallachian ruler and then place him in Transylvania?) Some people think the two figures look alike, although that's a bit dubious. Some of the connections scholars have made between the text of *Dracula* and the life of Vlad III are real stretches. McNally and Florescu suggested at one point that a passing reference to Nuremberg is a deliberate name-checking of the place where Vlad III's father became a member of the Order of the Dragon.

Why Did Bram Stoker Really Choose The Name Dracula?

The truth is, there's no evidence that Bram Stoker was even aware of the name Vlad III—much less that he was called "Vlad the Impaler." Miller warns that we can't assume that Stoker's notes are the end-all, be-all of the creation of *Dracula*, but they do provide the only factual information we currently have about Stoker's research. And the notes tell us exactly where Stoker got the name "Dracula."

While in Whitby in the summer of 1890 (after, it should be noted, his much-discussed dinner with Vambéry), Stoker came across a copy of William Wilkinson's book *An Account of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia*. We know that, because he copied sections of the book into his notes. Wilkinson's book contains references to multiple voivodes named Dracula, and some of the sparse details on one such Voivode Dracula make it into Stoker's text: that he crossed the Danube to attack Turkish troops and had some success. That's it. There is no reference to a "Vlad," no mention of a nickname Tepes or "the Impaler," no detailing of his legendary atrocities.

So why did Stoker choose that name, Dracula? Well, we can infer that from his own notes. He copied information from a footnote from Wilkinson's book that read in his own notes, "DRACULA in Wallachian language means DEVIL," with those capital letters. The footnote

explained that Wallachians gave the name "Dracula" to people who were especially courageous, cruel, or cunning. Stoker chose the name, it appears, because of its devilish associations, not because of the history and legends attached to its owner.

This is the only reference to the historical Voivode Dracula that appears in Stoker's notes. Is it possible he knew more? Sure, it's possible. But this all we know for certain.

The Evolution Of Stoker's Vampire

The fact is, there is probably no one single model for Dracula. Numerous scholars have suggested that the magnetic Irving provided the model for Dracula's mesmerizing personality, but this is, again, speculation. Stoker started with the idea that he wanted to write a vampire story, and his character changed and grew with Stoker's research and imagination.

With the discovery of the notes, we know a great deal about where Stoker's understanding of vampire lore came from. He consulted numerous books on European superstitions. Plus, vampires already existed in Gothic literature in tales like John Polidori's 1819 "The Vampyre" and Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's 1871 *Carmilla*. And Stoker invented some new powers and weaknesses for his count.

Through Stoker's notes, we can also see how the novel changed over time. Originally, the count wasn't from Transylvania at all; he was from Styria in Austria. And it appears that before he came across the name Dracula, Stoker was calling his vampire "Count Wampyr." (The pages that reference "Count Wampyr" are undated, but in some places, Stoker crosses out "Wampyr" and replaces it with "Dracula.") Like so many fictional characters, Count Dracula is an amalgam, a mix of information that Stoker found interesting and ideas he developed along the way. Dracula isn't even representative of one Eastern European state; he's a pinch of Transylvanian folklore (filtered through English writers) with a Wallachian name and a feudal estate straight out of English Gothic literature.

Vlad The Impaler Is *Our* Dracula (At Least For Now)

Vlad the Impaler is the "real" Dracula in that he is a real historical figure who bore the name Dracula. Beyond that, little else connects him with the fictional count. To call him the "model" for Dracula is an exaggeration.

But the idea that Vlad the Impaler is the historical basis for Dracula has become so pervasive, that it has invaded our current *Dracula* literature. Francis Ford Coppola opened his 1992 film *Bram Stoker's Dracula* in 1462 with Vlad Dracula summoning the powers of darkness in the wake of his wife's suicide. Documentaries about about the "true story of Dracula." And, of course, there's the recent film *Dracula Untold*, which purports to be Count Dracula's origin story, explaining how Vlad the Impaler became a vampire. In our popular consciousness, the Vlad-Dracula connection has taken on a life of its own, so that Vlad III has become pop culture's Dracula, regardless of what Bram Stoker originally intended.

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A grand jury will likely be called to investigate the death of a 32-year-old man who was taken into police custody last month after a rampage at a liquor store.

Douglas County Attorney Don Kleine said Tuesday he will need to see the autopsy report for Michael A. Harris of Omaha before making a final decision. State law requires a grand jury to be convened when someone dies in jail, in police custody or during an arrest.

"I will want to see the autopsy results, but if he was handcuffed, it's likely we'll call a grand jury," Kleine said. "If (Harris) died because of something that happened at the hospital, a grand jury might not be needed."

Omaha police on Tuesday night said Harris' death occurred while he was in custody.

Harris died Monday night at Immanuel Medical Center, a police spokesman said. He was taken to the hospital Sept. 19 after police were called to Sugar Hill Liquor at 5627 Ames Ave. by workers who say Harris attempted to assault another customer with a bottle.

According to a police report, the employees told officers that Harris entered the store about 11 p.m. and "said something about having been in a fight." The employees intervened when Harris, who was 5-foot-11 and 180 pounds, "picked up a bottle over his head" and seemed ready to smash it into the head of another customer.

One employee was pushed through the glass door of a large refrigerator and another employee was bitten on the arm during the ensuing struggle. Liquor store owner Joyce Westbrook-Davis declined to comment on Harris' death other than to say she and her staff had been hoping and praying for his recovery.

The report said Harris was placed in a police cruiser, where a camera recorded some bizarre behavior. He caused considerable damage to the cruiser despite being handcuffed and having "flex cuffs" placed on his ankles.

Harris, the report said, "began eating pieces of the headliner which he had pulled down and the wiring behind it." Harris was said to be "extremely uncooperative" and Omaha Fire Department paramedics were unable to treat him.

"At one point he began chewing on his hands, causing severe lacerations," the report said. "He also pulled out three of his own teeth and possibly ate one of his socks."

At Immanuel, police said Harris was restrained on a bed in the emergency room. At that time, the report said, his heart stopped and he had to be resuscitated.

Police suspected that Harris was under the influence of drugs. Kevin Harris of Omaha, the dead man's father, said he doesn't know if that was true. There might have been some medical reason for the behavior, he said.

"I saw him five minutes before (the incident), and he was fine," Harris said. "I went back to see why he hadn't shown up at my place and the lady at the store said, 'Something's wrong with your son. He was fighting like a madman.' "

An officer gave the elder Harris a ride to the hospital, where he said he was unable to see his son but spoke with a doctor. He said the doctor told him that he was worried about the length of time Michael Harris' brain had gone without oxygen.

The father said his son never regained consciousness and he later learned that his son would have severe brain damage if he ever recovered. "The doctor said that he would be blind and be like a 3-year-old" if he recovered.

Kevin Harris said he wants to know what happened to his son, who worked as an auto salesman and wrote rap tunes in his spare time.

"He wrote and produced rap," the elder Harris said. "That was his life's passion."

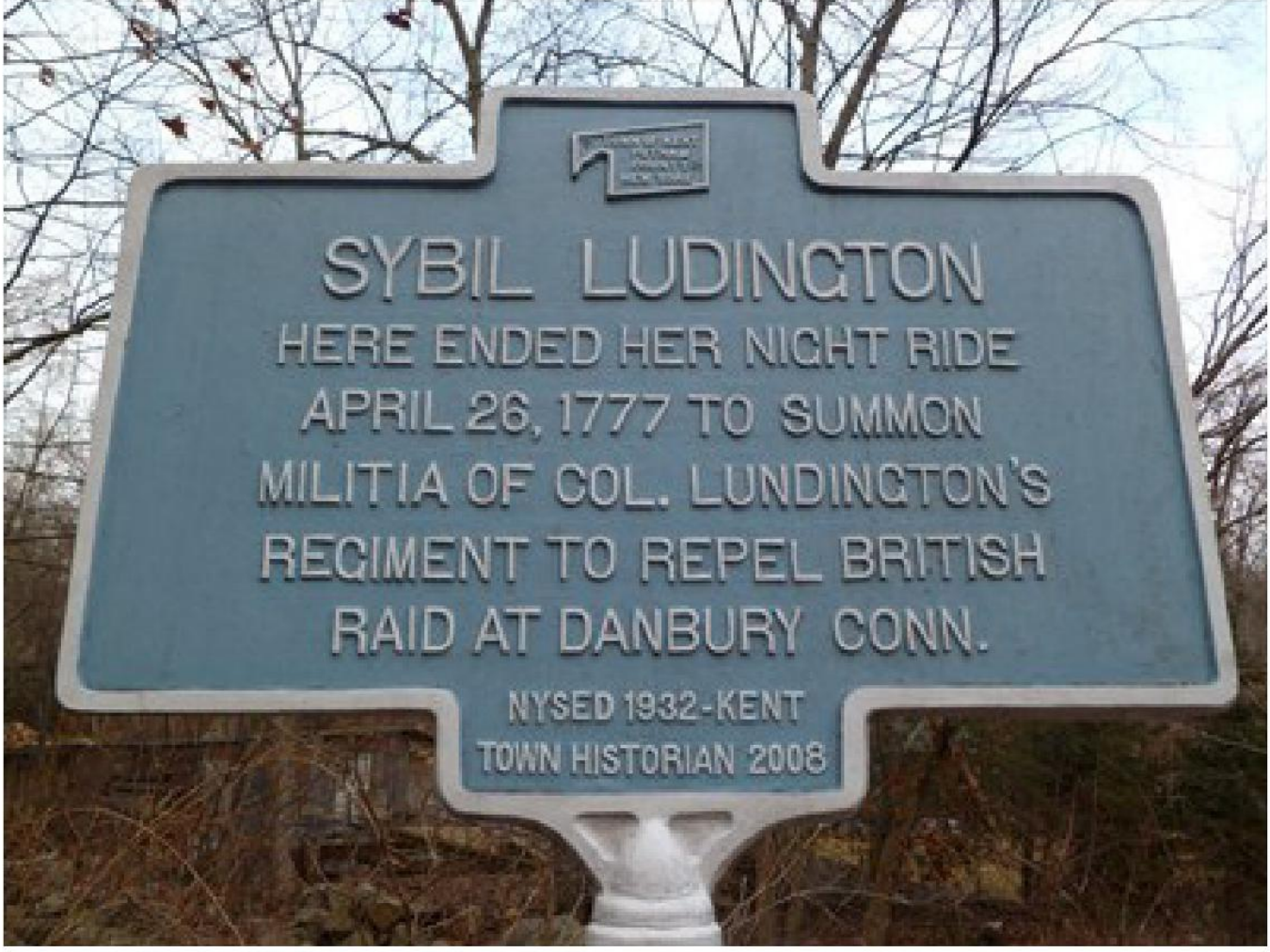
In addition to his father, Michael Harris is survived by two young children; his mother, Alicia Gullie; brothers Kevin Harris Jr. and Joshua; and sisters Lisa Harris and Monique Farmer, all of Omaha.

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Posted in Crime, Metro on *Wednesday, October 8, 2014 12:43 am.*

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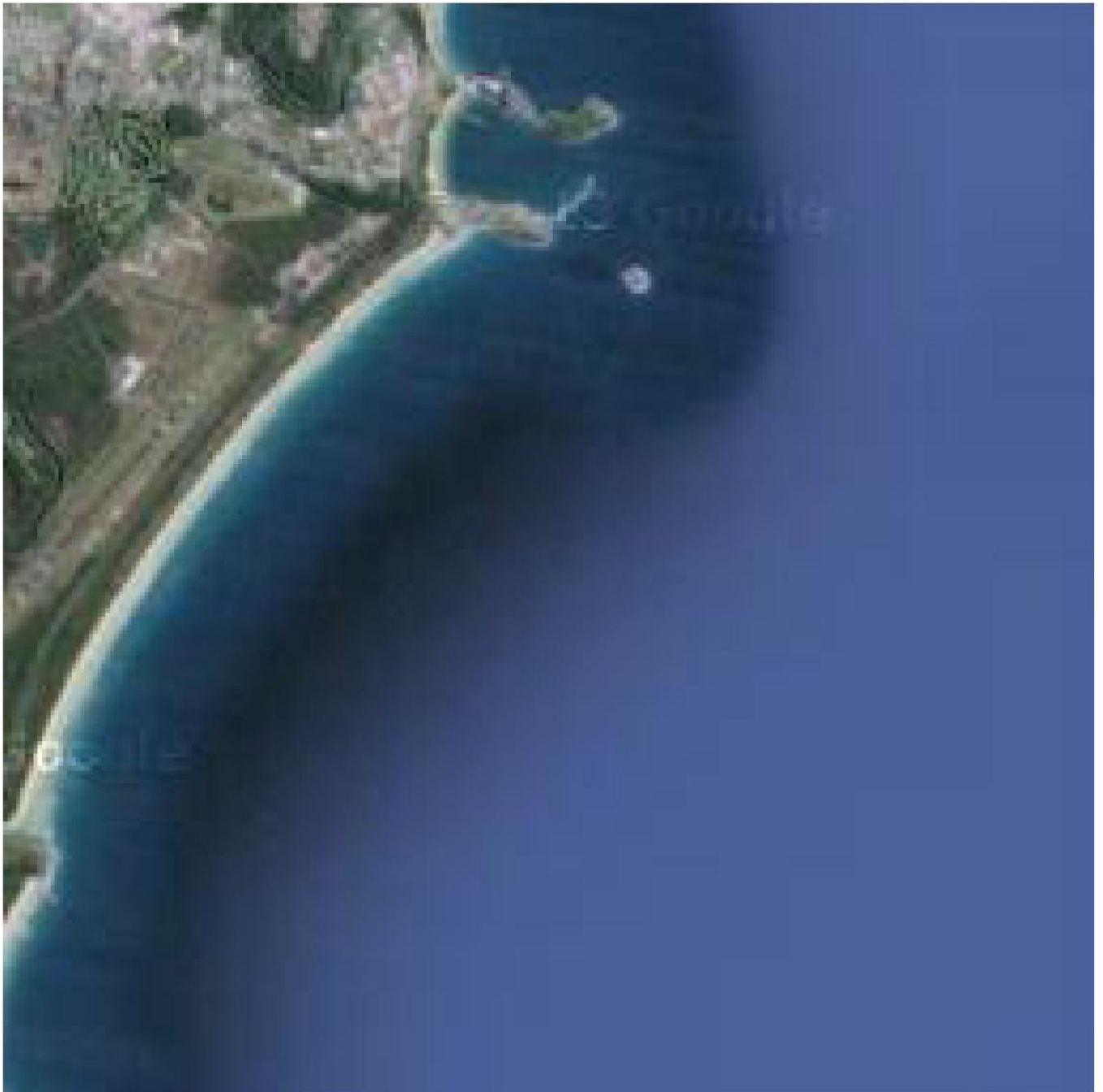
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A blue historical marker with a white border and a white pedestal base. The marker is set against a background of bare trees and a clear sky. The text on the marker is in white, raised letters. At the top center, there is a small, rectangular plaque with a logo and text that is partially obscured.

SYBIL LUDINGTON
HERE ENDED HER NIGHT RIDE
APRIL 26, 1777 TO SUMMON
MILITIA OF COL. LUNDINGTON'S
REGIMENT TO REPEL BRITISH
RAID AT DANBURY CONN.

NYSED 1932-KENT
TOWN HISTORIAN 2008





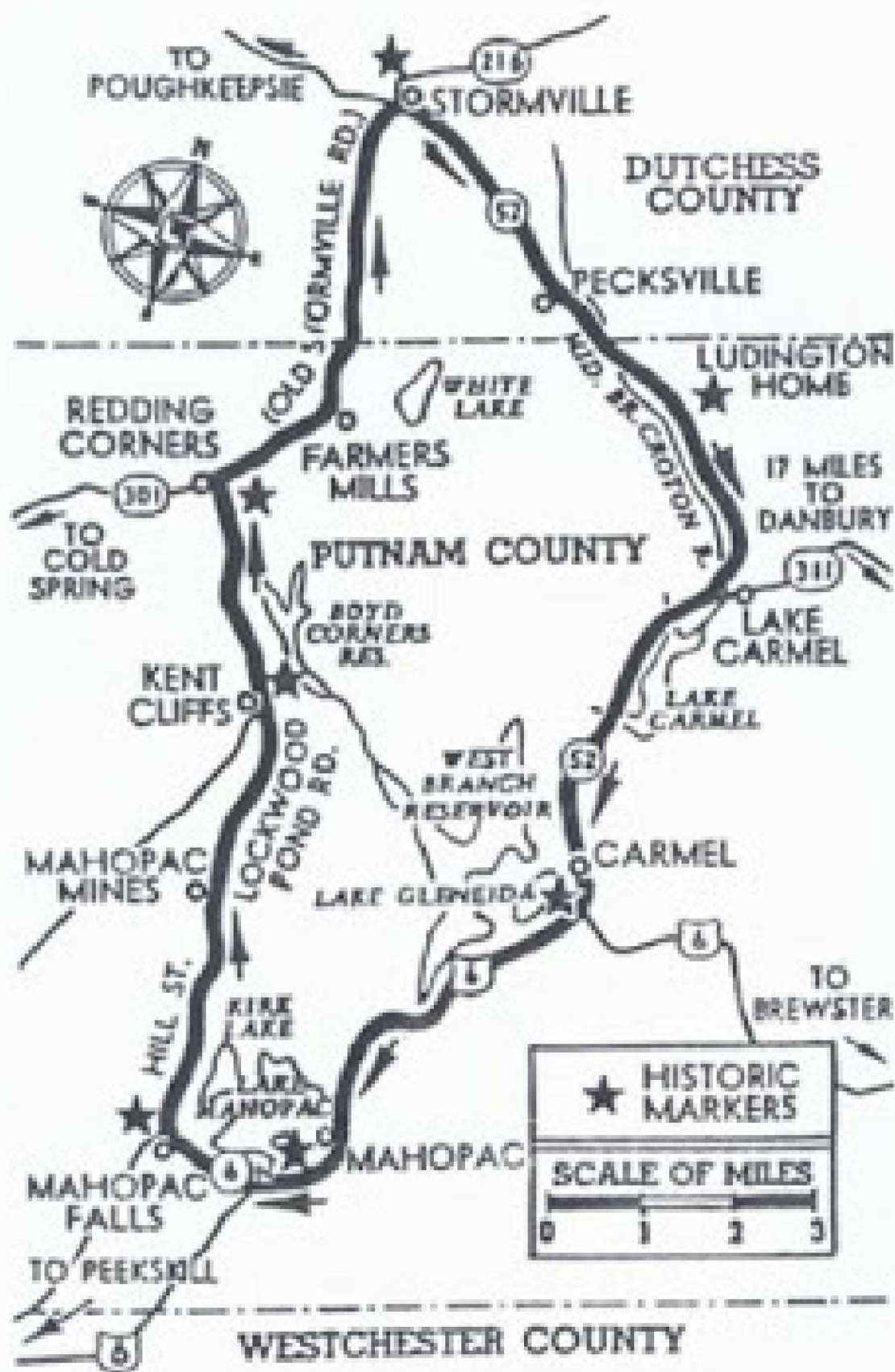
IN
Memory of
**SIBBELL
LUDINGTON.**

Wife of
Edmond Ogden
WHO DIED

Feb. 26. 1839.

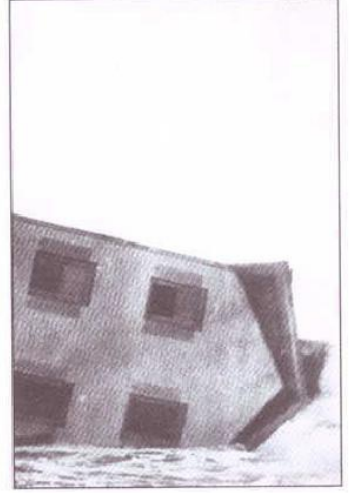
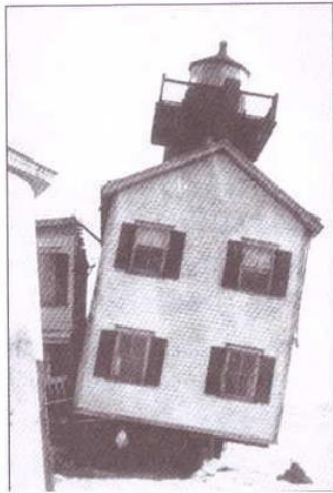
Aged 77 yrs 10 mo.

Sept 1838



The probable route of Sybil Ludington's night ride through what is now Putnam County, New York.





CASE NO. 858-748

PLAINTANT —

PHONE NO. _____

TIME OF EVENT 10/29/70 TIME OF EVENT 2210 DATE RECEIVED 10/29/70

AILS: I made contact with Officer J.S. Brown of this department in refer-
ence to this case at approx., 1437 hours on 10/31/70.

It was further learned that the house at which the alleged "Large White Rabbit", was chopping on the porch post, was located at the intersection of Guinea Rd., and Pomeroy Dr., and that there were several hand marks on the post.

After receiving this information I responded to the Kings Park West sub
division in an attempt to locate the Large White Rabbit.

On 10/31/70 at approx., 1655 hours after returning to the office, I recieved a phone call from a subject by the name of _____ of _____ Falls Church.,

Mr. [redacted] related the following story; At approx., 1645 hours, he had received a telephone call from a subj., who stated; "Is this [redacted]?" "You don't know me, I'm known as the Axe man". Subject went on to say, [redacted] Mr. [redacted] you have been messing up my property, by dumping tree stumps, limbs and brush, and other things on the property. The unknown subj., then stated [redacted]

11/10/70

Tom W. T. Johnson

COUNTY OF FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA
POLICE DEPARTMENT
INVESTIGATION REPORT

UNIT ASSG 307 AREA 30.0

CASE NO. 858 748

DIVISION 5 DUTY STATION 4

DATE 10-29-70

COMPLAINANT

PHONE NO.

HOME ADDRESS Security - Kings Park West

DATE RECEIVED 10-29-70 TIME RECEIVED HR. 12 MIN. 31 WEATHER RAIN LIGHT Dark

DATE OF EVENT FRES TIME OF EVENT HR. 12:30 MIN. 00 DAY OF WEEK 5 FEL - WISD raised

PLACE OF EVENT 5307 Guinea Rd. CLASS 51 CODE 601

NATURE OF CASE LARGE RABBIT AT LARGE 47 CO2

SUBJECT NO. 1 W/m 20 5'8 NED

ADDRESS

SUBJECT NO. 2

ADDRESS

DETAILS OF INVESTIGATION

This unit along with units 195, 303, 422, 266 and 378
Responded to the above location for a subject dressed
as a Rabbit with an ax. This subject, the Rabbit had
taken his ax to a park bench at Guinea Rd
and then run from the complainant.

All these units checked the area and found no
Rabbit.

No further action taken.

Case Closed

T.O.T.C.I.R.

Att. Lt. Wilson

TIME NOTIFIED 2251 TIME ARRIVED 2202 TIME CLEARED 2202 DATE 10-29-70

FOLLOW UP OR FURTHER

INVESTIGATION REQUIRED BY

J. L. Brown
SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATING OFFICER

APPROVED 10-29-70

W. JOHNSON

CASE NO. 858-748

PHONE NO.

COMPLAINANT _____ PHONE NO. _____

DATE OF EVENT 10/29/70 TIME OF EVENT 2210 DATE RECEIVED 10/29/70

DETAILS: see the Bunny Man ,he (Bunny Man), does not always have his Bunny suit
on.

On 11/4/70 at approx., 1647 hours I made contact with Mrs

and set a time to interview her

SON . /8 yrs.

At approx., 1600 hours I interviewed the subject and at this time he advised that he had never seen the "Bunny Man", and had never been with him. He further related that he had only heard of the BUunny Man at school, from the rest of the children talking about him.

further stated that one of his friends, named
had seen the "Bunny Man" on previous occasions.

On 11/5/70 I responded to the Laurel Ridge School and talked to the principal of the school. I explained to him why I was there and requested he furnish me with the name and address of the parents of which he did.

I then responded to the home of Mr and Mrs

in the Kings Park West Sub Division.

No one was at home at this time.

W. JOHNSON

CASE NO. 858-748

COMPLAINANT _____ PHONE NO. _____

DATE OF EVENT 10/29/70 TIME OF EVENT 2210 DATE RECEIVED 10/29/70

DETAILS color, bearing Md registration, 1970 . in the parking lot.

In the veh., on the front seat pratically concealed, was a white rabbit costume.

On the floor were several books pertaining to sex.

The vehicle was listed to

The vehicle was alleged to be leased to a

in Baltimore, Md.,

The subject who brought the vehicle to the parking lot is described as a W/M/20 to 30 years of age---70"---Stocky Build---and further described as rather handsome.

On 11/4/70 at approx., 1448 hours I responded to the home of Mrs.,

in Kings park West.

Mrs. [redacted] stated that she had heard her son saying something to the effect that he and his friend were supposed to go meet with the "Bunny Man".

I then talked to Mrs son /8yrs.

related to me that _____ was supposed to take _____ to meet the

Bunny Man, as knew where the Bunny Man stayed and has been with him
before.

Further related that most of the time, when the children go to

CASE OR EVIDENCE NO.

11/8/70

Inv., W.L. Johnson

W. JOHNSON

CASE NO. B58-748

COMPLAINANT _____ PHONE NO. _____

ADDRESS Security Gaurd--Kings Park West

DATE OF EVENT 10/29/70 TIME OF EVENT 2210 DATE RECEIVED 10/29/70

NATURE OF CASE Large White Rabbit At Large (Vandalism) CLASS CODE

DETAILS Mr may be the person posing as the White Rabbit as the description
that Mr provided is similar to the description of the subject, in this
case. Also the subj., referred to himself as the "Axe Man", which also
leads one to believe that the White Rabbit and the Axe man may be the same
person.

The stake out was set up at 2300 hours and ended at 0100, with negative results. Mr. [redacted] was advised to contact me in the event he recieved any more phone calls. Mr. [redacted] has not been heard from since.

Several attempts again were made to contact Mr. [redacted] in the meantime.

On 11/4/70 at approx., 1300 hours I recieved a call from Officer
Bender of this department in reference to this case.

Officer Bender stated that a Mrs. _____ had contacted him and stated that her son, _____ and a subject named _____ were alleged to know where the "Bunny Man" stayed and possibly who he was.

Prior to responding to the residence, I recieved a call from John Bazyk of the department, communications section and he related the following information:

~~Bazyk stated that he had recieved a call from the Metropolitan Police Department to the effect that a Mr. [redacted] a parking lot attendant at the P.M.I. Parking lot at 9th and D st., N.W. HAD OBSERVED a 1976 Ford L.T.D. Blue in~~

CASE OR SUMMONS NO. 11/8/70 Inv. W.L. Johnson

W. JOHNSON

CASE NO. 858-748

DIVISION 4 DUTY STATION 1

COMPLAINANT _____ PHONE NO. _____

ADDRESS Security--Kings Park West Sub-Division

DATE OF EVENT 10/29/70 TIME OF EVENT 2210 DATE RECEIVED 10/29/70

NATURE OF CASE Large White Rabbit At Large---(Vandalism) CLASS CODE

DETAILS to Mr. " You can make everything right , by meeting me tonight and talking about the situation. The unknown subj., then advised Mr to walk along Guinea Rd., between Zion Dr., and the railroad tracks between 2330 and 2400 hours 10/31/70. The subject then stated " You won't know me, but I'll know you. The subject then hung up the phone.

Mr. [redacted] stated that the subject who had called him sounded as though he may be a W/M/ in his late teens or early twenties, Subjects voice sort of quivered, as though he were scared. Mr. [redacted] related that he thinks he has heard the voice before, but could not remember where or when he heard the voice, or whose it was. Mr. [redacted] further related that he intended to meet the subj., if he could find some transportation to the scene.

At 1910 hours Mr. [redacted] was contacted and advised that a stake out was going to be placed on the scene, and in the area mentioned by the unknown subj. Mr. [redacted] stated that he would notify me by 2230 hours as to whether or not he would definitely be there.

At approx., 2300 hours, myself and Sgt., Hurst, Inv., Anderson and Inv., Shifko, went to the area of Zion Dr., and Guinea Rd., and set up surveillance in the area.

Prior to going to the area, Mr. [redacted] was advised to plan his arrival in the area for approx., 2330 hours.

The stake out was set up with the thinking that the subj., who had called

CASE OR SUMMONS NO. _____ 11/8/70 _____ Inv., W.L. Johnson
DATE _____ INVESTIGATING OFFICER _____

COUNTY OF FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA
POLICE DEPARTMENT
SUPPLEMENTARY INVESTIGATION REPORT

W. JOHNSON

UNIT ASSG. 197 AREA 30-0

CASE NO. 858-748

DIVISION 4 DUTY STATION 1

COMPLAINANT _____ PHONE NO. _____

ADDRESS Security Gaurd ---Kings Park West

DATE OF EVENT 10/29/70 TIME OF EVENT 2210 DATE RECEIVED 10/29/70

NATURE OF CASE Large White Rabbit At Large--(Vandalism) CLASS _____ CODE _____

DETAILS After a very extensive investigation into this and all other cases of this same nature, it is still unsubstantiated as to whether or not there really is a white rabbit.

The only people who have seen this so called white rabbit have been children of rather young ages, and the complainant in this case

Upon interviewing every one in this case that may have had any knowledge of any-incidents concerning a white rabbit, that has been no significant information uncovered that would lead to the identity of the person or persons that were posing as a white rabbit.

This case will be marked as inactive.

INAC TIVE.

CASE OR SUMMONS NO. 3/14/71 Inv. W. I. Johnson

COUNTY OF FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA
POLICE DEPARTMENT
SUPPLEMENTARY INVESTIGATION REPORT

W. JOHNSON

UNIT ASGD 197 AREA 30-0

CASE NO. 858-748

DIVISION 4 DUTY STATION 1

COMPLAINANT

PHONE NO.

ADDRESS Security Gaurd---Kings Park West

DATE OF EVENT 10/29/70 TIME OF EVENT 2210 DATE RECEIVED 10/29/70

NATURE OF CASE Large White Rabbit At Large---(Vandalism) CLASS CODE

DETAILS the woods.

Mr stated that the subject was carrying an axe with a two to
three foot long handle and a three to four inch blade on it. He further
stated that he believed that the subject lived in the immediate area.

Mr went on to say that the subject spoke in a muddled tone and he
felt that the subject had a french accent, at least it sounded
French to Mr

On 11/5/70 I made contact with Mrs and advised her who I
was and why I was contacting her. I also talked to her son who
denied having any knowledge, what so ever of the "Bunny Man". He also
stated that all he knew of the "Bunny Man", was what he had heard at school.

INVESTIGATION CONTINUING.

CASE OR SUBVENS NO

11/8/70

Inv., W.L. Johnson

Palmerston Woman seeks Big Foot and friends

October 23, 2014

news.com.au

Northern Territory

- 1 hour ago



Palmerston woman Deb Taipale, of Palmerston has a fascination with all things Big Foot Source: News Corp Australia

IN the still of the night, nestled in the heart of the Californian Mountains, Deb Taipale heard the strange calling.

"Weeee-oop ... were-oop," cried an unknown creature while Ms Taipale and 29 others cowered in a tent, terrified. It was an overwhelming moment for the Palmerston woman, who had finally fulfilled a lifelong dream of hunting down the notorious Big Foot in the same place a sasquatch was apparently spotted more than 50 years ago.

"I covered my face. I couldn't deal with it. I was absolutely terrified," Ms Taipale said.

Her fascination with the topic of cryptozoology was aroused at the age of seven or eight with Leonard Nimoy's *In Search Of*.

She continued to research footprint sightings discovered in 1958.

Then, 18 months ago, Ms Taipale joined Facebook and realised she was not alone.

"I started to realise I'm not the only one that believes in this," she said.

She developed strong friendships with her online peers, and they planned for a two-week holiday.

The group of 30 were prepared for the unexpected – packing night goggles and hiking gear.

One afternoon the camp began to hear unexplainable noises, similar to those a gorilla might make. "It was grunting and roaring. The grunt vibrated in our chests," Ms Taipale recalled. "I was terrified."

She could hear tree knocks and branches breaking, and often felt like someone was following them, but she couldn't see anything.

“The stuff that did happen was very strange,” she said.

The Big Foot lovers huddled in the tent, afraid of the unknown.

Rocks were clacking around the tent site, and Ms Taipale estimates three creatures were between five and 50m from them.

“We estimate three because the sounds were coming from three different directions,” she said.

Back in her homeland, Ms Taipale is desperately trying to find like-minded people.

“I know more about Big Foot than Yowie,” she said. “I know there’s people out there that believe in it but they keep it secret.”

She said some were judgmental of her keen interest.

“Everyone thinks you’re mad,” she said. “I don’t care what you think – it’s my hobby.”

Originally published as Big Foot hunter a step too close

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Saturday 18 October 2014

Patricia Davies was the last of the team behind Operation Mincemeat, the subterfuge which allowed the Allies to invade Sicily



Patricia Davies: 'We were all in on the plot. We were enthralled by the whole idea' Patricia Davies: 'We were all in on the plot. We were enthralled by the whole idea'

Patricia Davies, who has died aged 93, was the last surviving member of the clandestine group in Naval Intelligence that in 1943 launched Operation Mincemeat, a brilliant subterfuge that significantly altered the course of the Second World War.

The plan of Operation Mincemeat, as told by Ben Macintyre in his book of the same name and in a BBC documentary, was to drop a dead body in the Mediterranean off the coast of Spain and hope the Nazis would find it. The body was dressed

as a Royal Marines officer, and was attached to a briefcase containing a series of official-looking but faked letters indicating an Allied plan to push back against Axis forces in southern Europe by invading Greece and Sardinia — and not, as expected, Sicily.

The Nazis took the bait: believing the false information to be true, they diverted massive forces to Greece, enabling a successful Allied invasion of Sicily.

Patricia Davies (née Trehearne) was 18 when the war started and had just left Roedean, the private girls' school near Brighton, when a friend of her father's, a Royal Marines colonel, recruited her to work for Naval Intelligence.

She worked in the Admiralty, first for Ian Fleming (author of the James Bond novels), who was assistant to the Director, and later in a secret division called 17M, located in a small stuffy room in the basement of the Admiralty building.

A dozen people worked there, reading decrypted Axis communications sent from Bletchley Park and preparing daily summaries for the top brass. "There were 12 people in that room," she later recalled, "and there was enough air for six. Everyone smoked, and the room was a sea of smoke. The room was lit by fluorescent lights that made everyone look blue."

Patricia Davies

The idea for Operation Mincemeat originated with Ian Fleming (who got the idea from a 1937



detective novel called *The Milliner's Hat Mystery*, by Basil Thomson). Fleming elaborated the ruse in a memo which lay dormant until it was taken up by the head of 17M, Commander Ewen Montagu.

The plan required finding a suitably unmarked corpse and kitting it out to look like a Royal Marines officer on a secret mission. The corpse of a vagrant was found, and work began on creating a complete identity and life story for it. It was given the name Major William Martin, and put into a uniform, and into the pockets of the uniform were placed the painstakingly forged ephemera of a real person's life: theatre ticket stubs, bus tickets, a letter from a bank manager and even an

engagement ring for a fictitious fiancée.

"We were all in on the plot," Patricia Davies recalled in one of the interviews she gave in later life. "We were enthralled by the whole idea, and did everything we could to elaborate it."

The required veil of secrecy was never penetrated. "We were all terrified by the Official Secrets Act, and thought we'd end up in the Tower of London if we gave anything away," she said. Her parents thought she was working as a filing clerk. The secrecy lasted only as long as necessary: a few years after the war ended, Montagu published his own account of Operation Mincemeat and it was made into a film, *The Man Who Never Was* (1956).

"Churchill was kept informed, but he did rather dine out on it, which was another reason the story began to come out," Patricia Davies recalled.

Her personal contribution to the preparation of Major William Martin was to address, in her fine handwriting, the envelope (to General Sir Harold Alexander, C-in-C, Middle East) containing the false Allied invasion plan.

On April 30 1943 the body of William Martin was deposited in the sea off the east coast of Spain from a naval submarine. It was intercepted by a fisherman, brought to Spanish authorities, and before long Nazi intelligence became interested. After an agonisingly long wait (mainly due to the ineptitude of Nazi spies), the contents of William Martin's briefcase became known to the Nazi command, even allegedly reaching Hitler's desk. Eight divisions were diverted to Greece, leaving Sicily barely defended.

The Allies invaded Sicily in July. One of the British officers involved in the successful invasion was Lieutenant Denis "Paddy" Davies. He and Patricia became engaged on VE-Day, May 8 1945 — Davies proposed to her in the thick of the euphoric crowds that were swarming around Buckingham Palace to celebrate the victory. They married in July that year.

Patricia Davies (back row, second from right) with members of the Operation Mincemeat team

Patricia Helen Trehearne was born in London on July 18 1921, the eldest of three children, and grew up in Surrey, Sussex and Devon. Her father, Edward Trehearne, was a lawyer; her



mother, Nell George, was an amateur opera singer. Patricia's younger sister, Anne, was evacuated to Canada during the war, and in adulthood was fashion editor of *Queen*. Their brother, John, was a farmer.

After the war, Paddy Davies was chairman of the cosmetics companies Lenthéric, Yardley, Momy and Germaine Monteil. He and Patricia had three children:

Charlotte MacKean, a psychotherapist; Annabel Merullo, a literary agent; and Mark, a banker. Paddy Davies died in 2010.

They lived in West Sussex. Although for much of her life post-war she talked little about Operation Mincemeat, she was in demand as an interviewee before and after the publication of Macintyre's book. Asked by a German television interviewer what she did during the war, she replied, with characteristic sharpness: "Well, I tried to ensure that as many of you were killed as possible."

Patricia Davies, born July 18 1921, died July 22 2014

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THE GORGE AMPHITHEATER QUINCY, WASH.

This remote amphitheater provides sweeping views of the Columbia River and offers camping exclusive to concertgoers. "It's a great place to be outdoors, see amazing scenery and at the same time see an awesome live show," Huber says. "You get this really pure sound from the artists. The back of the stage is literally a cliff. I've heard stories of people losing guitar cases off it." 509-785-6262; gorgeamphitheatre.net

FENWAY PARK

BOSTON

The home to the Boston Red Sox also hosts about five concerts every summer. Music lovers not only get great shows, but they also have a chance to visit an historic baseball park, which enhances the experience. "Even before the artist goes on, the audience is in the moment," Huber says. 877-733-7699; redsox.com

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN NEW YORK

This iconic Manhattan arena lives up to its reputation. "It's a piece of American history. It has bragging rights associated with it. I don't think anyone in the U.S. would not know Madison Square Garden if you mention the name," Huber says. It's also a memorable place to catch a performance. You can see a great show there. They definitely do it right. They know what they're doing." 212-465-6741; *thegarden.com*

**BANK OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
PAVILION AT MEADOWBROOK
GILFORD, N.H.**

Huber was always glad to see this venue on the schedule when he was touring. "It's just a really cool little weekend getaway, surrounded by a quaint little picturesque New England bed and breakfast community." Located on Lake Winnepesaukee, it has been nominated several times as Venue of the Year by the Academy of Country Music. 603-293-4700; *meadowbrook.net*

THE RYMAN AUDITORIUM NASHVILLE

This National Historic Landmark, the former home of the Grand Ole Opry, is the mother church of Nashville and country music, Huber says. "I don't know if there's any place that would have more music history." The theater offers tours, and hosts a range of contemporary acts, from country to Americana to rock. 615-889-3060; ryman.com

RED ROCKS AMPHITHEATER DENVER

This visually stunning natural venue is literally surrounded by red rocks. It has hosted several shows that have become hit live albums from artists like U2, Dave Matthews and Neil Young. Located in a park, it also offers hiking and fitness events. "It is hands down my very favorite place in the world to see a show. It's a freak of nature. It couldn't have happened any better," Huber says. 720-865-2494; *redrocks online.com*

**GREEK THEATRE
BERKELEY, CALIF.**

Owned by the University of California-Berkeley, this open venue is built in the style of an ancient Greek amphitheater. "You get this cool juxtaposition of a modern city and the classical theater around you," Huber says. "The acoustics are pretty killer as well. The Greeks were designing theaters before there were PA systems." 510-642-9988; thegreektheatreberkeley.com



HOLLYWOODBOWL.COM

The legendary Hollywood Bowl stands out for its sound.

HOLLYWOOD BOWL LOS ANGELES

In car-centric L.A., this legendary outdoor site is easily reached on foot from nearby Hollywood tourist sites. But it also stands out for acoustics. "They really nailed it," Huber says. "There are plenty of amphitheaters that look like shacks. Hollywood Bowl is not one of those. You can tell they really took pride." 323-850-2000; hollywoodbowl.com

CIRCUIT OF THE AMERICAS/ AUSTIN360 AMPHITHEATER **AUSTIN**

This music venue is part of a racetrack but still has a great vibe and sound. With a capacity of 14,000, it isn't overwhelming. "You have all the key factors you need to have a great time and be entertained," Huber says. "Austin is one of the top cities in America and, I would even say in the world right now. Anyone who's looking to travel to see music now would want to visit." 512-301-6600; *austin360amphitheater.com*

THE TABERNACLE

ATLANTA

Often called the Tabby, this former church once had a congregation of more than 4,000. Left vacant for years, it was revamped as a performance venue to attract crowds attending the 1996 Olympics. "It's a phenomenal sounding, very good-looking room," Huber says. "We all end up in Atlanta sometime, and when you're there, you should catch a show." 404-659-9022; tabernacleatl.com

2. SEE THE TREE THAT OWNS ITSELF IN ATHENS

It's one of the most peculiar pieces of real estate in the world. The Tree that Owns Itself can be found on a cobblestone stretch of Finley Street in Athens. Beloved by its owner William H. Jackson, the oak tree and its surrounding eight feet were bequeathed to itself back in 1832. (The original white oak fell back in 1942 and today's tree is a "child" of the original.)

3. GO GOLD MINING IN DAHLONEGA

Before the California Gold Rush, there was gold in "them thar Georgia hills!" In 1828, a deer hunter stumbled over a rock that turned out to be filled with gold, and America's first gold rush got underway. While much of the gold has been mined out, you can still explore the mine tunnels and pan for gold yourself. Maybe you'll get lucky like me and find a few little flakes of the shiny stuff!

1. ATTEND A UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA FOOTBALL GAME IN ATHENS

Dress up nicely in your red and black and cheer "the Dawgs!" It's football the way it's SUPPOSED to be played! Don't forget to tailgate before the game, and enjoy the night-life on Broad and Clayton Streets afterward. And MAYBE, if you're lucky like me, you'll get to say hi to Uga, the school's mascot.

7. BE AMAZED BY THE CYCLORAMA IN ATLANTA

This gigantic diorama of the Battle of Atlanta puts the shadow boxes you made as a kid to shame: it's one of the biggest in the world. Commissioned back in the 1880s, the artists were guided by recollections of the battle's survivors. Three-dimensional figures were added in the 1930s and — rumor has it — one of the dying soldiers is modeled after Clark ("Rhett Butler") Gable!

While you're here, pop into Zoo Atlanta and see the animals.

6. SHOP FOR CARPET IN DALTON

My hometown is the "Carpet Capital of the World," and if you buy a rug or wall-to-wall carpeting anywhere else, well, you paid too much! Hit the carpet outlets that line the exits along I-75, then wander around Dalton, where you'll find plenty of Civil War memorabilia. Grab lunch or dinner at The Depot — a restaurant located in the old train station, wherein you'll find a brass marker indicating what was once the absolute center point of Dalton.

5. VISIT CUMBERLAND ISLAND

Georgia's largest barrier island is home to wild horses, nesting sea turtles and visitors who can appreciate the beauty of unspoiled nature. The National Park Service now maintains Cumberland Island with numerous campsites. Those who like creature comforts will enjoy an inn created out of the former Carnegie mansion.

4. SEE JACK'S RIVER FALLS ALONG THE GEORGIA/ TENNESSEE STATE LINE

Located in the Cohutta Wilderness, this is my hands-down favorite for "prettiest place on earth." You can't get there unless you're willing to hike a bit, but once you arrive, you are rewarded

with a trio of beautiful pools, each fed by the cascading waterfall from above.



LOST DUTCHMAN'S MINING ASSOCIATION

Georgia's Dahlonega Gold Belt can occasionally turn up some flakes of the precious metal, which inspired a rush of prospectors in 1828.

**8. VISIT HELEN, GA., IN THE
NORTHEAST MOUNTAINS**

They put the "Alps" in Appala-

chia. Helen is a charming Bavarian-inspired mountain village. You'll find lots of bed-and-breakfasts and local craftsmen selling their wares. Every weekend, it seems there's something special

going on. Check it out during the fall, when you'll catch the leaves turning and you can also enjoy Oktoberfest. (Which lasts much longer than the month of October!)

10. VISIT STONE MOUNTAIN

When I lived in Atlanta, I used to go to Stone Mountain all the time. Not to see the incredible carving of the leaders of the Confederacy, although the east-facing carving on the world's largest exposed piece of granite IS spectacular. My favorite spot was on the other side of Stone Mountain, where if you hike around the side, you can enjoy a stunning view that stretches endlessly to the west. Even though I haven't been there in a long while, that view is still vivid in my memory.

9. GAZE AT TOCCOA FALLS IN NORTHEAST GEORGIA

As long as you are in Helen, drive over to these falls and marvel at the breathtaking cascade of water. It's an easy hike and well worth it. There is something incredibly soothing about the sound of the water rushing, and the view is breathtaking; that's why it's called "Toccoa" — Cherokee for "beautiful."

Rhyolite, Nev.

If you like decrepit buildings in your ghost town, this is the place to see. Located northeast of Death Valley National Park, Rhyolite was established in 1905 during the Gold Rush and grew quickly, filled with buildings that had electricity, water mains, an opera house and a stock exchange. It fell apart nearly as fast; the mine closed in 1911 and the town was all but abandoned by 1920. Since then, it has become one of the most photogenic ghost towns in the West because of the crumpled buildings and the impressive rocky landscape around the area. The town became a popular site for movies

and some of the buildings were further destroyed during shooting. Among the ruins are the Bottle House, walls from the three-story bank building, part of the jail and an old caboose. Details:
<http://www.nps.gov/deva/historyculture/rhyolite-ghost-town.htm>.

Bodie

Located near the Nevada state line east of California's Yosemite National Park, Bodie is one of the most famous ghost towns in the United States, in part because it's so well preserved. The town boomed during the Gold Rush days, with an estimated 10,000 residents in 1880, more than 60 saloons and a red-light district. Once the mine shut down, so did the town, all but abandoned by the early 1900s. Today, its 100-or-so buildings are maintained by the California parks system, which protects the town in "an arrested state of decay," keeping the buildings standing but making few other alterations. Bodie is located 13 miles (21 kilometers) off Highway 395 down a dusty, bumpy road in an isolated area, so make sure you have plenty of gas. Also, beware if you take off with an artifact from town — a curse reportedly comes with it until the item is returned. Details: <http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page—id=509>.

TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is Sunday, October 12, the 285th day of 2014. There are 80 days left in the year.

On this date in:

1492: Christopher Columbus makes his first landfall in the New World, in present-day Bahamas.

1822: Brazil becomes independent of Portugal.

1908: South Africa Constitutional Convention meets in Durban.

1915: English nurse Edith Cavell is executed by the Germans in occupied Belgium during World War I.

1933: Bank robber John Dillinger escapes from a jail in Allen County, Ohio, with the help of his gang.

1934: Peter II becomes King of Yugoslavia following the assassination of his father, King Alexander.

1938: Japanese troops seize Canton, severing the railway to the temporary Chinese capital in Wuhan.

1942: American forces defeat the Japanese in Battle of Cape Esperance on Guadalcanal in World War II.

1945: Allied Control Council in Germany orders dissolution of Nazi Party after World War II.

1951: Under attack by French planes, the Viet Minh rebels suffer one of their worst defeats of the civil war with 1,200 dead and 5,000 captured, in an attempt to take Nghialo.

1956: Britain tells Israel the English will assist Jordan if Israel attacks that country.

1960: Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev upsets the decorum of U.N. General Assembly by pounding the desk with his shoe during a dispute.

1962: India's Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru says Indian army has been ordered to oust Chinese forces from Indian territory near Tibetan border.

1964: U.S. forces take control in South Vietnam, ousting government of Maj. Gen. Nguyen Khanh.

1984: An Irish Republican Army bomb explodes at a hotel in Brighton, England, where Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was attending a conference, killing five people.

Goldfield, Ariz.

If you're into touristy ghost towns, Goldfield is the place to visit. Located in Apache Junction just outside of Phoenix, it became a bustling town when gold was discovered in the 1890s. Goldfield had about 4,000 residents, a general store, post office, school and hotel during its heyday, but was all but abandoned after the gold vein dried up in the 1920s. Today, the town has become a popular tourist attraction, with daily Old West gunfights, gold panning and rides on Arizona's only narrow-gauge train. Numerous tours are available, including through the Goldfield Mine, Lu Lu's Bordello, the Mystery Shack and the Goldfield Historic Museum. Details: <http://goldfieldghost-town.com/>.

Death Valley Junction

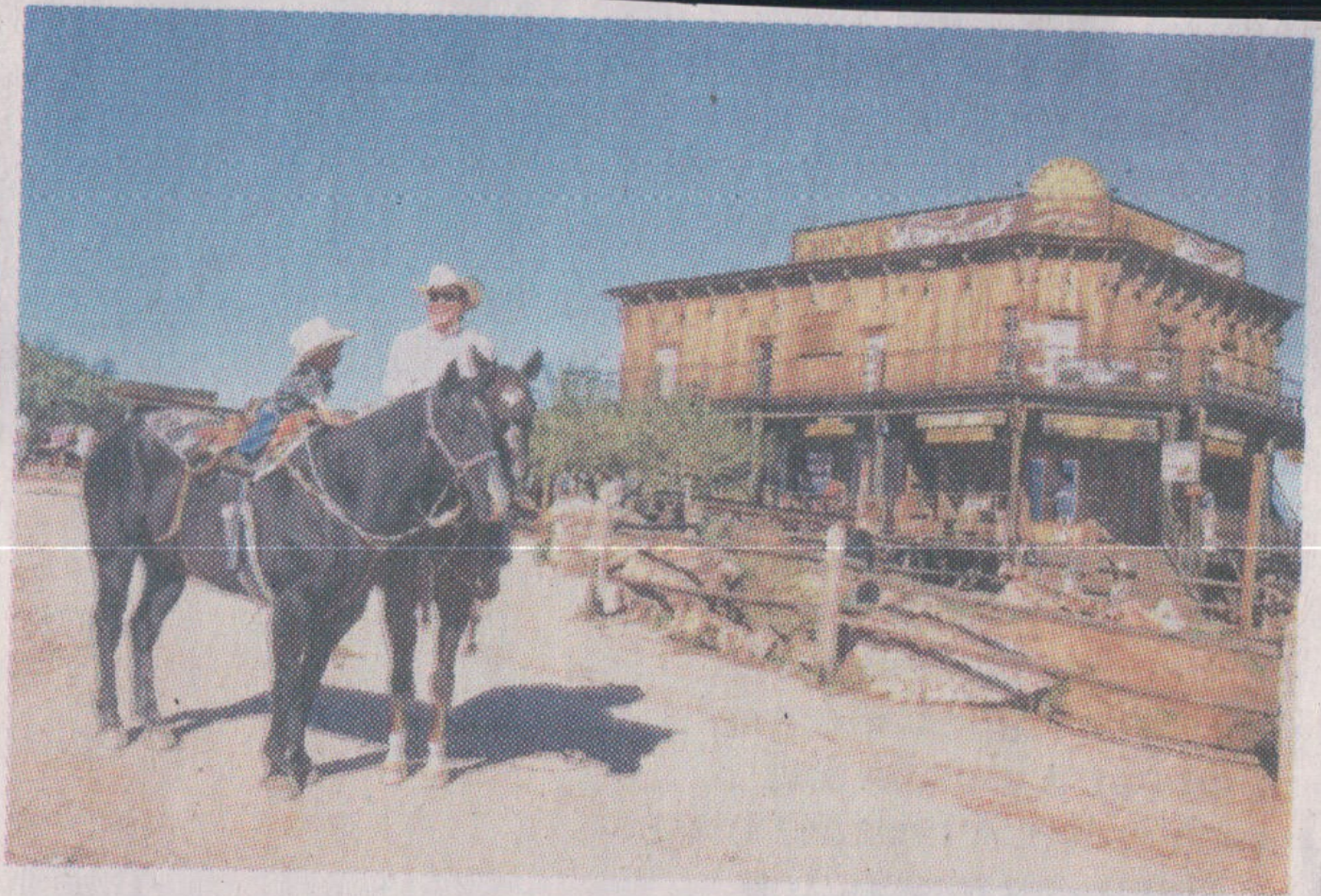
The town near the eastern entrance of Death Valley National Park thrived while the borax mine and Death Valley Railroad were still in operation. By the late 1920s, Death Valley Junction was little more than a tourist stop on the way to the park. Though most of the buildings are gone, the town is still a draw today, thanks to the Amargosa Hotel. The hotel claims to be haunted and the Amargosa Opera House is a must-see. Marta Becket, a former Broadway ballet dancer, purchased the hotel in 1967 and restored the opera house, covering the walls and ceiling with hand-painted murals so she could perform in front of an audience. The opera house still has performances today, typically with local performers on Saturday nights. Details: <http://www.nps.gov/deva/historyculture/death-valley-ghost-towns.htm> and <http://www.amargosa-opera-house.com/>.

Ghost

Continued from E5

Gleeson, Ariz.

Originally called Turquoise, Gleeson is one of several ghost towns near the famous Wild West town of Tombstone. Native Americans first mined turquoise in the area and settlers found copper, lead and silver in the area in the late 1800s. A fire destroyed 28 buildings in 1912, but the town was rebuilt and continued to thrive until the mines shut down around 1940. A handful of people still live in the area, but it still has the ghost-town feel with numerous buildings in various states of decay. Ruins include a hospital, a saloon and store, a jail, the foundation of a school and a cemetery. Courtland and Pearce also are nearby, part of what is known as the Ghost Town Trail. Details: <http://www.ghosttownaz.info/gleeson-ghost-town.php>.



AP

Golfield, Ariz. boomed when gold was discovered in the 1890s but was abandoned in the 1920s. Today the town offers numerous tours, attractions and activities for visitors.



AP

An old building in Rhyolite, Nev., a ghost town located northeast of Death Valley National Park. Rhyolite was established in 1905 during the Gold Rush, quickly boomed and fell apart after the mine closed in 1911.

TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is Monday, October 13, the 286th day of 2014. There are 79 days left in the year. On this date in:

1775: The U.S. Navy is founded as the Continental Congress orders the construction of a naval fleet.

1792: The cornerstone of the

Executive Mansion, later known as the White House, is laid during a ceremony in Washington, D.C.

1815: British occupy South Atlantic island of Ascension to prevent Napoleon's escape from St. Helena.

1943: Italy declares war on

Germany — its former Axis partner.

1957: The East German government seals its borders and recalls all East-mark holdings for conversion into a new currency.

1960: Richard Nixon and John F. Kennedy participate in the third televised debate of their campaign, with Nixon in Hollywood and Kennedy in New York.

1981: Voters in Egypt participate in a referendum to elect Vice President Hosni Mubarak as the new president, one week after the assassination of Anwar Sadat.

1993: A fanatic fan of tennis star Steffi Graf is convicted in the stabbing of rival Monica Seles and receives a two-year suspended sentence.

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

GALVE

○	□	□	□	□
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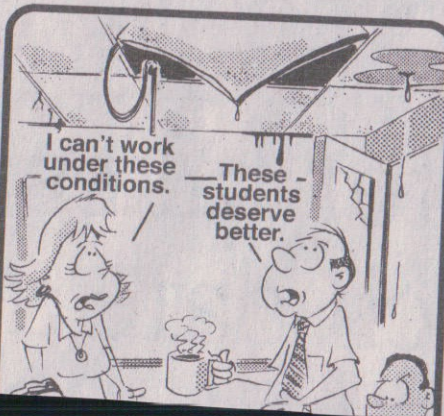
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DRING

□	□	□	□	□
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THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek



www.freeJUSTJUMBLEapp

Polar bear breaks into Alaska home

Posted: Oct 14, 2014 9:30 AM PDT

Updated: Oct 14, 2014 9:34 AM PDT

<http://www.myfoxny.com/story/26782473/polar-bear-breaks-into-alaska-home>

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) - Ruby Kaleak's part-time job is keeping polar bears away from people in a village on Alaska's Beaufort Sea coast, so she was prepared when one of the biggest bears she's ever seen got inside a house.

Kaleak tells the Alaska Dispatch News that she got a call by radio on Friday that a bear was inside a doorway.

She and a co-worker spotted the polar bear inside 81-year-old Betty Brower's home in Kaktovik, a village of 300. It was eating seal oil from a drum.

Kaleak carries a shotgun loaded with beanbag and firecracker rounds, but she and a co-worker shooed the bear away.

Biologists say that as ice on the sea recedes, polar bears appear in the village to eat whale parts left by hunters.

By Reuters

October 28, 2014 | 4:00pm



Photo: EPA

Scientific theories including the “Big Bang” believed to have brought the universe into being 13.7 billion years ago and the idea that life developed through a process of evolution do not conflict with Catholic teaching, Pope Francis said on Tuesday.

Addressing a meeting of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, an independent body housed in the Vatican and financed largely by the Holy See, Francis said scientific explanations for the world did not exclude the role of

God in creation.

“The beginning of the world is not the work of chaos that owes its origin to something else, but it derives directly from a supreme principle that creates out of love,” he said.

“The ‘Big Bang’, that today is considered to be the origin of the world, does not contradict the creative intervention of God, on the contrary it requires it,” he said.

“Evolution in nature is not in contrast with the notion of (divine) creation because evolution requires the creation of the beings that evolve,” the pope said.

The Church once opposed early scientific explanations of the universe that contradicted the account of creation in the Bible, famously condemning the 17th century astronomer Galileo Galilei who showed that the earth revolved around the sun.

However, more recently it has sought to shed its image as an enemy of science and the pope’s comments largely echoed statements from his predecessors.

Pope Pius XII described evolution as a valid scientific approach to the development of humans in 1950 and Pope John Paul reiterated that in 1996.

In 2011, the former Pope Benedict said scientific theories on the origin and development of the universe and humans, while not in conflict with faith, left many questions unanswered.

The psychic, a dead cyclist and an act of 'betrayal'

Simon Osborne

Friday 10 October 2014

independent.co.uk

Kris Cook was almost half-way into a cycling challenge when the 36-year-old suffered a cardiac arrest and died in front of his girlfriend, Nicola Tait. The incident during the Ride London-Surrey 100 on 10 August made national headlines, inspiring thousands of strangers to leave donations at Mr Cook's online charity page.

The following month, at an event in the cyclist's hometown of Woking, audience members said the celebrity psychic Sally Morgan appeared to invoke his spirit, describing a bicycle, a man called Kris with a "K" who wore Lycra shorts, and the name Nicola.

Today, as separate allegations were made about violent and homophobic threats by Ms Morgan's husband in an encounter with a psychic-awareness campaigner, Ms Tait described her distress after being alerted to the Woking event by audience members.

"This has now upset myself and family a lot to hear the account that was told that evening to hundreds of people," she told the Woking Advertiser. "I am left to feel upset, betrayed and even more confused... I do not think any of us should have to suffer any more or be put through any more pain."

Ms Morgan, 63, is a renowned psychic who appears frequently on TV and tours the country with sell-out live stage performances. Princess Diana and George Michael have been among her celebrity fans, but she has critics, too.



Critic Kris Cook and his girlfriend Nicola Tait (Rex Features)

Sharon Griffiths was at the event in Woking, and alerted Ms Tait via Facebook. "Kris was the first spirit that came through," she said. "[Morgan] said she wanted to put it out there because his name was spelt unusually with a 'K'. She said she could see he was wearing tights... [and] was getting the name Nicola."

Ms Griffiths, 29, who said she went to the event "with a lot of hope" after her father's death in February, added: "After the interval, [Ms Morgan] said Kris was coming back and showing her a bicycle. She said she could

see he wasn't wearing tights, but Lycra cycling shorts."

A spokesperson for Sally Morgan Enterprises (SME) said neither Ms Morgan nor the company had been aware of Mr Cook's death. A statement continued: "[We] have been in contact with Nicola Tait, given her the transcript of the message and have offered to assist her further should she wish to speak with Sally... this is a private matter." The dispute comes

as a video has emerged online in which John Morgan, who is also his wife's manager, verbally abuses and threatens a man who had been handing out leaflets to people arriving at one of her shows in London.

Mark Tilbrook began attending the psychic's shows in Manchester, where he lives, in March. His leaflets, entitled "Look after yourself", offer advice to people attending any psychic with the hope of hearing from someone who has died. "I wanted audiences to have the information they needed to make informed decisions about what they're seeing," Mr Tilbrook, 30, said.

Mr Tilbrook said Mr Morgan did not agree and in Manchester "came out and told me to fuck off and that he would punch me if I didn't leave".

Video: Sceptic Mark Tilbrook confronted by family of Sally Morgan

Mr Tilbrook said he faced repeated threats at a subsequent show in Liverpool. Before a third show in London on 30 April he concealed a camera in his jacket. In the video, Mr Morgan approaches Mr Tilbrook and warns him that he is being sued for libel. Mr Morgan then makes threats including, "I'm gonna knock you out one day" and "one day you're gonna be lifted and you'll disappear somewhere". Daren Wiltshear, Mr Morgan's son-in-law, then arrives. Mr Morgan says: "Right, so I'm gonna hit you in a minute, I'm gonna knock you out." Mr Wiltshear adds: "I've seen him do it, and you really don't want him to do it." After further legal threats, Mr Morgan says: "You know, you look pale. Are you on drugs or has someone shagged you too much? One of your boyfriends been up your arse?"

When Mr Tilbrook, who has continued to hand out the leaflets, blogged about the encounter, he said he received a notice of legal action from Ms Morgan's lawyers. He eventually contacted the Good Thinking Society, founded by Simon Singh, the science writer who has faced legal threats himself, including from Ms Morgan. Mr Singh also put Mr Tilbrook in touch with his lawyers and Good Thinking has launched a "psychic awareness month" inspired by Mr Tilbrook's actions. Mr Tilbrook agreed to publish the video online and volunteers are handing out versions of his leaflets at psychic events every day in October.

"What Mark is doing is incredibly and utterly reasonable," Mr Singh said. "He's just asking people to think about what they're seeing... to be given such abuse and physical threats is just shocking."

In response to questions about the video, Sally Morgan Enterprises said "it would like to apologise for any offence caused by the material. Since April 2014, Mark Tilbrook has targeted Sally Morgan's live performances, handing out leaflets to audience members. On several occasions theatre staff have had to call the police in order to get him removed".

It added: "Due to the continual presence of Mark Tilbrook and John Morgan's ever-growing concern for Sally, he reacted angrily and out of character. Sally was not aware of the comments made in this video. She is very upset by the events, does not condone any of the behaviour."

Mr Tilbrook says he has never seen the police, nor ever been “removed” from a Morgan event. He adds: “I have never approached John Morgan or anyone from Sally's team when handing out leaflets. On every occasion they have gone out of their way to approach me.”

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Ramapough Indians, Mahwah officials decry depiction in new movie as 'hate crime'

By Dan Ivers | NJ Advance Media, for NJ.com | Follow on Twitter on December 05, 2013 at 5:05 PM, updated December 05, 2013 at 11:08 PM

[nj.com](#)

MAHWAH — Local officials are joining members of the Ramapough Indian tribe to decry a new Hollywood movie they claim perpetuates harmful stereotypes about the group.

"Out of the Furnace", which features an ensemble cast including Christian Bale, Casey Affleck, Woody Harrelson, Willem Dafoe, Forest Whitaker and Zoe Saldana, is the story of an Iraq veteran (played by Affleck) from a western Pennsylvania steel town who becomes involved in the underground world of bare-knuckle boxing as a way to settle his gambling debts.

He eventually agrees to travel to New Jersey's Ramapo Mountains to throw a fight, where he falls victim to a notorious group of backwoods outlaws who live in an insular world of drugs, crime and ramshackle trailers. The movie is scheduled to open nationwide on Friday.

Ramapough Chief Dwaine Perry said the characters are clearly based on negative stereotypes of his tribe, which they have long worked to combat.

"It eats up and destroys one's self-esteem, particularly for the children. You can't really measure the destruction," he said. "It's a massive social humiliation. Not only is it a hate crime, it's an extremely violent crime."

The production company behind the movie, Relativity Media, has claimed the people depicted in the movie are not meant to reflect any particular group, calling the characters "entirely fictional."

Mahwah Mayor Bill Laforet, who traveled to New York City to see an advance screening Wednesday night, called that notion laughable. He cited a scene featuring a Bergen County police officer advising characters to leave the area, as well as the mountain natives traveling in 4x4 trucks and all-terrain vehicles as tell-tale signs they are based on stereotypes of the Ramapough.

"There's no question in my mind. Not one shadow of a doubt," he said in a phone interview with NJ.com. "Along with other things, there are other factual elements of the movie that lead me to believe that this is all about the Ramapough Mountain Indians and the people of Stag Hill."

A particularly seedy villain played by Harrelson even bears the last name DeGroat — one of the more common surnames among members of the tribe.

The Ramapough have fought an uphill battle against discrimination by the larger community for decades.

Their native area in and around Stag Hill — which encompasses parts of Mahwah, Ringwood

and Rockland County, N.Y. — was long used as a dumping ground for paint sludge and other waste by the Ford Motor Co., leading to high rates of cancer and other health issues in the community.

They also received widespread attention from the media in 2006, when a New Jersey park ranger fatally shot unarmed tribe member Emil Mann during a confrontation on Stag Hill. The ranger, Chad Walder, was eventually acquitted of manslaughter charges.

Today, however, Perry said the tribe enjoys unwavering support from officials in Mahwah and surrounding towns. In addition to Laforet, Mahwah school superintendent C. Lauren Schoen spoke out against "Out of the Furnace" during a news conference on Wednesday.

"I think it's wonderful that we've chosen this unified stance," he said. "We're a vital part of the community here."

Regardless of the local support, Perry believes the renewal of negative attention will bring a new influx of teenagers and other thrill-seekers to Stag Hill, on a hunt for the mysterious "hillbillies" they've seen on the silver screen.

"You're talking trailers, dirt roads, ignorance, violence, inbred, stupid," he said. "In about an hour we're going to have caravans of knuckleheads looking for us."

The chief said he laid blame for the tribe's depiction with the movie's producers, and not with the all-star cast of actors who signed on later. However, he hoped some of the bigger names might see the harm it causes the community, and use their high-profile status to speak out against it.

For his part, Laforet understands that adding controversy to the film might give it extra attention, and even grant it a larger audience, which he believes might not be such a bad thing.

"It's going to put fannies in the seats. I can't tell people not to go and see it," he said. "In fact, I think it's important people go and see it. Go and see how disgraceful this movie is."

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Rare 1823 Wreck Found—Capt. Linked to *Moby-Dick*, Cannibalism

nationalgeographic.com



Believed to be from the Nantucket whaling ship *Two Brothers*, a 19th-century anchor lies off remote Hawaiian islands in 2008. (See more pictures) Photograph courtesy Tane Casserley, NOAA

Ker Than

for National Geographic News

Published February 11, 2011

Linked to *Moby-Dick* and skippered by a man who (reluctantly) ate his own cousin, the whaling ship *Two Brothers* has been lost on a remote Pacific reef since 1823.

Now experts say they've found hard evidence of the ship 600 miles (970 kilometers) from Honolulu (map). If confirmed, the discovery would be the first of a wrecked whaler from Nantucket (map), Massachusetts—the birthplace of the U.S. whaling industry.

The shipwreck was found at French Frigate Shoals in the remote Papahnaumokuakea Marine National Monument, archaeologists announced Friday.

At its peak, from the 1820s to the 1840s, Nantucket was home to several dozen whaling ships. Whaling crews hunted whales species for their blubber, which was boiled down into oils that were used in everything from lamps to perfume to machine lubricants.

Whale oil "was the day's equivalent of our oil trade. ... The resource was so valuable that it drove man to hunt species to extinction," explained Kelly Gleason, a maritime archaeologist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and maritime heritage coordinator at Papahanaumokuakea.

Whaling Captain a "Most Impressive Man"

Two Brothers was captained by George Pollard, Jr. The Nantucket native had the dubious distinction of commanding two whaling ships and losing both.

Pollard's first ship, the *Essex*, sank in 1820 after being rammed by a sperm whale—an incident that inspired Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*.

Adrift at sea in small whaleboats for more than three months, the starving crew of the *Essex* resorted to cannibalism. Before being rescued by another ship, Pollard helped execute and eat his 18-year-old cousin, who had drawn a bad lot.

Despite the *Essex* tragedy, Pollard was offered another captaincy soon after, this time of the *Two Brothers*.

In the early 19th century, whaling voyages often took two years or more. The *Two Brothers* set sail from Nantucket in November 1821. By winter 1822, the ship had rounded the tip of South America. The crew was on its way to newly discovered whaling grounds near Japan when tragedy struck in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

Before departing, Pollard had said he believed "lightning never strikes in the same place twice," according to Gleason. Yet on the night of February 11, 1823, the *Two Brothers* hit a shallow reef and quickly broke apart in the heavy surf.

The ship's crew was rescued, but Pollard's career as a whaling captain was over.

In Nantucket, he was known as a Jonah, a man who brings misfortune on a ship. Pollard was relegated to a career as a night watchman, one of the least respected social positions on the island.

According to the Nantucket Historical Association, Melville met Pollard many years later, and wrote of him: "To the islanders he was a nobody—to me, the most impressive man, tho' wholly unassuming, even humble—that I ever encountered."

The Telltale Harpoon?

The *Two Brothers* remained lost until 2008, when maritime archaeologists participating in a NOAA expedition in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands discovered a large early 19th-century anchor in the shallow waters of French Frigate Shoals.

The team suspected from the beginning that the wreckage belonged to the *Two Brothers*, but they lacked strong evidence until 2009, when more artifacts, including the tip of a whaling harpoon, were discovered.

"A whaling harpoon is an exciting artifact to discover at a shipwreck site," said Gleason, who is leading the *Two Brothers* archaeological survey.

"The technology of the whaling harpoon changed a great deal over the course of the 19th century, so you can match a whaling harpoon to a specific time period and place of origin."

Also, "blacksmiths would have also etched the name of a ship on the harpoon, because if a harpooned whale got away, they wanted to make sure whoever caught it next knew that the whale was already claimed."

The artifacts are currently undergoing treatment, and it will be several more months before it's known whether the *Two Brothers* initials are indeed etched on the harpoon tip, which is heavily encrusted.

In the meantime, Gleason and her team say they're confident that the wreckage was the *Two Brothers*.

"There were three whaling ships lost at French Frigate Shoals: *The Two Brothers*, lost in 1823; the *South Seaman*, lost in 1859; and the *Daniel Wood*, lost in 1867," Gleason

explained.

"The *South Seaman* and *Daniel Wood* were lost much later, and vessels of their post Civil War era would have had heavy machinery on board. The shipwreck at French Frigate Shoals is clearly a vessel out of Nantucket in the 1820s, based on the dates and provenience of dozens of artifacts."

Hard Evidence of Whaler's Floating Factory

Among the recovered artifacts are broken pieces of ceramic plates that may have belonged to Captain Pollard himself.

"The ceramics discovered at the *Two Brothers* site reflect the type of dishware you would find at the captain's table. These are not the plates of the crew," Gleason said.

Other artifacts include try-pots—big iron cauldrons used to boil down whale blubber into oil—iron cooking pots, and a small grinding wheel, probably for sharpening tools.

"People often think that shipwrecks are only glamorous if you find gold or silver, but in this case, it's truly a working ship," Gleason said. "All the artifacts that we're finding reflect that this was a floating factory."

(Related: See pictures of ancient treasure from a U.K. shipwreck.)

Very little wood from the ship has been recovered, but this isn't surprising, as the region's warm waters, rough waves, and marine animals would have quickly deteriorated the wood, Gleason added.

More *Two Brothers* Artifacts Await on Seafloor

The recovered artifacts are currently being restored and will eventually be displayed at Papahānaumokuākea's Mokuapapa Discovery Center in Hilo, Hawaii.

In the meantime, Gleason said, the team plans to continue surveying and documenting the shipwreck site.

"Every time we return to Papahānaumokuākea, we discover something new," she said.

"There are a lot of artifacts associated with this shipwreck that we haven't found yet."

Ben Simons, chief curator of the Nantucket Historical Association, said he's very excited by the discovery of the *Two Brother's* remains.

"A lot of whaling history is sort of slumbering in the history books and scattered in museums," Simons said. "But this [finding] allows the history to come alive for a modern age."

Reports of Witchcraft-Related Child Abuse On the Rise in London - NBC News

By James Novogrod and Ammar Cheikh Omar

nbcnews.com

LONDON — Kevani Kanda was just six years old when her family accused her of being a witch. She was being molested by a relative and the trauma made her wet the bed and sleepwalk.

But instead of trying to find out what was wrong, Kanda's family were convinced she was possessed by an evil spirit. For the next five years, she was starved, forced to eat her own vomit, beaten repeatedly and given suppositories containing spices to "get rid of the evil spirits." And the torture occurred in a London suburb.

"I never told anyone what was happening to me because to me it was normal," the 25-year-old Christian told NBC News. "That was my normal world back then and unfortunately my teachers did not pick up on the fact I was being horrendously abused."

Kanda isn't alone. London's Metropolitan Police announced this week that reports of abuse where the child is accused of being a witch or possessed by an evil spirit are on the rise. Fourteen years after the force recorded its first allegation of such an incident, there have been at least 27 cases during in 2014 alone.

Most of the cases involve pastors or religious leaders in African communities who have incorporated elements of witchcraft or spirit possession into their version of fundamentalist Christianity. These beliefs are widely held in countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, where Kanda was born.

In the Congolese capital Kinshasa, fundamentalist sects take money from families to rid their children of evil spirits. In the city of 10 million, more than 20,000 young people are thought to be living on the streets, many of whom have been shunned as witches by their families, according to research by charity War Child. Kanda said a cousin in her homeland is currently living on the streets with her baby after being shunned in this way by the family.

British authorities acknowledge they have been slow to react but say it is clear the issue is widespread in many religious communities in London.

These "rogue pastors" often tell families that a period of bad luck or even an illness has been caused by that child being possessed. What motivates these religious leaders? "Power, money, greed and control," Kanda said. "A lot of these people who go to church are vulnerable and they are looking for something to hold onto."

"Some of the people who do this are gangsters," added Bob Pull, a communities consultant with the London-based Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service charity. "They are making money out of the worries that people have."

Kanda returned to the Congo for a BBC documentary last year and was shocked by what was considered acceptable in mainstream society. Asked how far the abuse went, she said: "How

far can your imagination go? I witnessed a four-year-old old boy brought to the church by his mother because he was playing too rough with his brother. The pastor told her [the behavior] was the result of him being possessed and that he was a witch."

The boy endured a four-day "deliverance," Kanda said, in which he was starved, forced to drink hot palm oil and prevented from using the bathroom. "The adults were actually laughing," Kanda said. "They were stepping on his little body, his stomach, saying they were stepping on the spirits."

In the past decade and a half, London's most high-profile cases have been linked to Christian groups with roots in Western and Sub-Saharan Africa. But cases involving other faiths, such as Islam and Hinduism, have emerged more recently as authorities have delved deeper.

"To most people accusations of witchcraft may seem so bizarre that they say, 'It can't possibly be happening,'" Detective Superintendent Terry Sharpe said. "But the more you come to learn about the cultures and beliefs of other communities, particularly as now they're moving all around the world, the more people learn about it and have the confidence to report it."

Sharpe is head of the Metropolitan Police's Project Violet, the team tasked with tackling this form of abuse. He said authorities have little idea about how many cases continue to go unpunished.

The 27 cases already reported this year are "purely scratching the surface," according to the CCPAS' Pull.

"Here in London, on an approximation there will be one million people attending church on a Sunday ... and within that there are an unknown number of these churches have no child safeguarding policies or procedures," Pull said. Figures by the London Church Census in 2012 suggest that number is closer to 720,000. But the figures highlight the challenges facing authorities.

"We can't wait for another homicide so that awareness is raised again"

Sharpe and others acknowledge part of the problem with trying to combat abuse linked to witchcraft has been that officers have been wary of being branded racist in the past. The Metropolitan Police has endured a strained relationship with London's black and ethnic minority communities and Sharpe said there had been some initial concerns about the "sensitivity in confronting various faiths."

"To a certain extent professionals are quite scared to address these issues within their practical work," said Mor Dioum, director of the Victoria Climbié Foundation. "Often it's a fear of being accused of being racist or being ignorant of this type of abuse. But the approach must be this, and this is the VCF's position, no culture or religion must be allowed to override the protection of that child."

Sharpe added: "As far as I'm concerned we must not hide behind [fears of racism

accusations] — child abuse is child abuse."

Dioum's organization is named after 8-year-old Victoria Climbié, whose guardians tortured and killed her in 2010 after claiming she was possessed by a demon. The Ivory Coast-born girl was burned with cigarettes and forced to sleep in a sealed garbage bag in the bath until she eventually died.



Metropolitan Police, PA via AP file

Another high-profile case in London was that of 15-year-old Kristy Bamu, who was drowned in the bath on Christmas Day 2010 by his Congo-born sister and her boyfriend who claimed he was possessed.

These cases were key in bringing the faith-based abuse into the public consciousness. But Sharpe is adamant that police will not wait for another

brutal slaying to ramp up their response.

"We can't wait for another homicide so that awareness is raised again," he said. "We need to be doing something to ensure that the warning signs are picked up earlier."

Kanda is optimistic that "it's a problem that can be dealt with, but it's not a solution that's going to come today or tomorrow."

She added: "What has happened to me has not happened in vain. I have a platform to tell people my story so we can work together to do something about it."

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Martin Guerre, a French peasant, married Bertrande de Rols in 1538. She bore him one son. But in 1548, after a falling out with his father, Martin disappeared. Eight years passed without any sight of him. Because of Catholic law, Bertrande could not remarry. But in 1556 Martin suddenly returned. Or did he?

The man who claimed to be Martin Guerre was similar in appearance and knew many details of Guerre's life. Bertrande accepted him as her husband, and lived with him for three years, bearing him two children. But when the new Martin sued his uncle for part of the inheritance of his father, the uncle became suspicious and accused him of being an impostor. Specifically, the uncle claimed that the new Martin was actually Arnaud du Tilh, a man from a nearby town.

The case went through a series of trials and appeals. The court seemed to be favoring the authenticity of the new Martin, until suddenly the original Martin Guerre showed up. He had been serving in the Spanish army, where he had lost a leg.

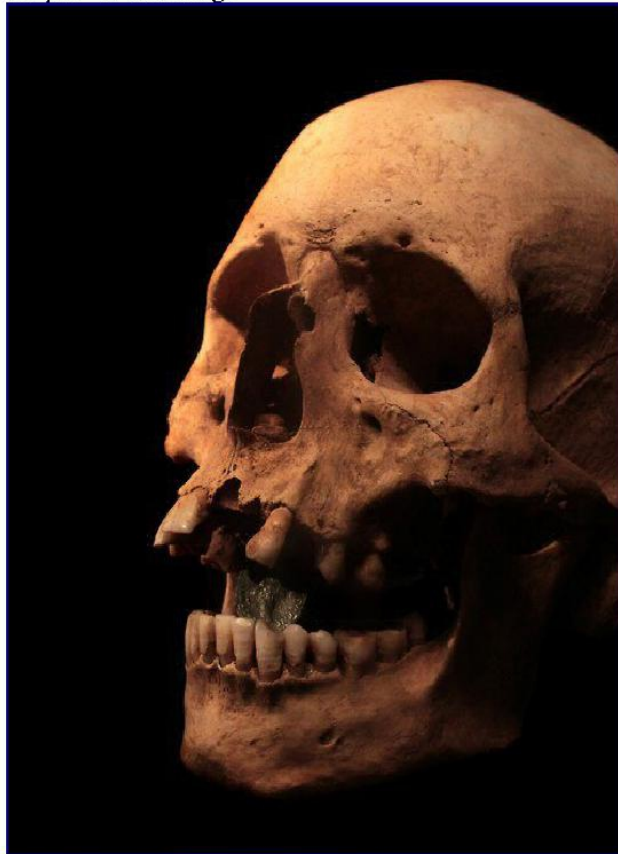
The fake Martin Guerre was executed. The real one eventually reconciled with his wife, who bore him another child.

A film based on the story of Martin Guerre was released in 1982.

- Davis, Natalie Zemon. (1984). *The Return of Martin Guerre*. Harvard University Press.
- *The Return of Martin Guerre*. (1982).

[archaicwonder](#)

October 26th 2014, 2:40:27 pm · 5 hours ago



Roman Skull with a Charon's Obol, c. 2nd Century AD

Charon's Obol is the coin placed in or on the mouth of a dead person before burial. Greek and Latin literary sources explain it as a payment or a bribe for Charon, the ferryman who conveyed souls across the River Styx, which divided the world of the living from the world of the dead. The placement of the coin on or in the mouth has also been explained as a seal to protect the deceased's soul or to prevent it from returning.

In early mythology, the coin was supposed to be an obol denomination, however over the years other types of coins were used as well. Sometimes fake coins made from thin metal foil were substituted, like this [example](#).

The coin placed in the skull above is Roman, specifically an Antoninus Pius dupondius ([example](#)). In Latin, Charon's obol is sometimes called a viaticum, which in everyday usage means "provision for a journey" (from via, "way, road, journey"), encompassing food, money and other supplies.

The custom is primarily associated with the ancient Greeks and Romans, though it is also found in the ancient Near East. In Western Europe, a similar usage of coins in burials occurs in regions inhabited by Celts of the Gallo-Roman, Hispano-Roman and Romano-British cultures, and among the Germanic peoples of late antiquity and the early Christian era, with sporadic examples into the early 20th century.

Royals end camel sacrifice tradition

By News from Elsewhere... ..media reports from around the world, found by BBC Monitoring 09:32 UK time, Tuesday, 07 October 2014



Up until recently, the Tonk royal family sacrificed two camels to give meat to the local poor

A royal family in India's western state of Rajasthan has reportedly announced that it will no longer sacrifice camels as part of a religious feast.

The Tonk royal family has been sacrificing two camels every year since 1864 and giving the meat to the poor as part of the Eid Al-Adha festival. But camels have now been named the state animal of Rajasthan, making it illegal to hunt or kill them, so the family has decided to put an end to the tradition, [The Hindu newspaper reports](#).

Despite the camels' new status in Rajasthan and an ongoing animal rights campaign to end the annual sacrifice, senior Tonk royal family member Nawab Hamid Ali Khan [told the Press Trust of India](#) had not felt pressure to end the practice. "The 150-year-old tradition ends now to save the animal and to maintain peace and communal harmony in the Tonk district," Hamid said. A male goat would be sacrificed instead.

According to census data, there are only 322,000 camels left in Rajasthan state, down from 668,000 animals in 1997. Rajasthan says a law may now be required to outlaw camel sacrifice altogether.

Sacramento Victim's Family Shocked Haunted House Considered Using Serial Killer As Theme - CBS Sacramento

cbslocal.com

Anjali Hemphill

Anjali Hemphill joined CBS 13 in June 2012 and she's happy to make the...

SACRAMENTO (CBS13) — A haunted house is drawing criticism after organizers used scenes from a grisly, real-life crime to frighten customers.

CBS13 first heard about the haunted house on Auburn Boulevard in Sacramento when the family of one of the serial killer's victims contacted us.

The organizers changed the theme after we started asking questions, and they've apologized for using Richard Trenton Chase's killings as a theme.

Actor apologizes

For David Wallin, the idea of using the serial killer as a theme was a slap in the face.

One of the most disturbing murders involved Wallin's then-pregnant wife Teresa Wallin. Investigators say Chase broke into her home, brutally killed her, and her unborn baby.

"It was horrifying and the worst part of it is, I was the one that got home after a terrible day at work and found her, which was what I live with every day," he said.

"It's horrifying that everybody else somehow is making some kind of situation, money, whatever you want to call it, off of other people's grief," he said.

Chase was convicted of six violent murders in the span of a month in the late 1970s and was known as the vampire of Sacramento.

"You can directly tell that they are reenactments of each and every one of the murders," said David's daughter Krista. "Don't do it on a true story about this town, and what happened is one of the most horrible events this town has ever seen."

David Wallin says even after 36 years, his wife's murder still haunts him, and it doesn't need to haunt anyone else.

"He's lived through enough," Krista said. "He still lives through it every day, and for them to just reenact what happened, not only him but the families, its ridiculous."

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ANCHORAGE -

A 21-year-old Shageluk man charged in the murder of his parents with an axe Tuesday night was arraigned Thursday afternoon in Bethel, according to Alaska State Troopers.

Everett Semone is accused of killing Flossie Semone, 46, and John Arrow, 57, in the Western Alaska community situated along the Innoko River, not far from the Yukon.

Family members said Wednesday that the victims had been killed by their own son, in a crime which stunned the village. Shageluk School Principal Joyanne Hamilton called the victims "precious members of our community," describing their deaths as a "terrible loss."

In a criminal complaint filed Thursday against Everett Semone, AST Sgt. Nicholas Zito says troopers received a call just after 9:15 p.m. Tuesday about an "axe attack" in Shageluk.

"I spoke with (the caller) who reported that Everett Semone 'went crazy' and attacked his parents Flossie Semone and John Arrow with an axe at their Shageluk residence," Zito wrote. "Everett was reportedly running loose in the village."

Zito subsequently spoke with the caller's husband at about 10 p.m., who said he'd been told that someone in the house had "jumped out of the back window of the residence after Everett began attacking (his) parents with an axe."

Just before 4 a.m. Wednesday, the first caller's husband let Zito know that Semone had surrendered to him and was "cooperative," with locals holding him at the Shageluk city building. The husband relayed more information to troopers later that morning,

"While they were at the house with Everett, his sister Geraldine Semone asked him why he did this to his parents," Zito wrote. "Everett replied, 'Something took over something in my mind.'"

When troopers arrived at the victims' home Wednesday, they found John Arrow's body at the end of a hallway from the front door to the living room, where Flossie Semone's body was located. Wounds on both bodies appeared "consistent with the use of a hatchet."

The deceased were transported to the State Medical Examiner's Office in Anchorage where an autopsy will be conducted. Semone was held initially by Shageluk residents since there is no local law enforcement and then taken to Bethel by troopers.

Everett Semone faces two murder charges, each an unclassified felony.

Editor's note: Information that would identify witnesses in the case has been omitted from this story.



Decades Old Mysteries Solved in Oklahoma

By Heide Brandes

OKLAHOMA CITY (Reuters) - Oklahoma authorities have formally identified six people whose bodies were found in a western Oklahoma lake in 2013, bringing a resolution to missing persons mysteries that spanned decades, a spokeswoman for the state medical examiner said Thursday.

The bodies were found in September 2013 when Oklahoma Highway Patrol divers stumbled upon two mud and rust-covered vehicles feet apart at the bottom of Foss Lake during tests of new sonar equipment. Each car contained three bodies.

The cause of death for all six was determined to be probable drowning as the result of an accident, spokeswoman Amy Elliott said. The confirmation of identities solves the mystery surrounding the disappearance of three Oklahoma teenagers, who went missing Nov. 20, 1970, while on their way to attend a football game in Elk City, Oklahoma.

Jimmy Allen Williams, 16, Leah Gail Johnson, 18, and Thomas Michael Rios, 18, all of Sayre, were found in a 1969 Camaro.

Three adults reported missing from Canute, Oklahoma in 1969 were recovered from a 1952 Chevrolet and identified using DNA testing, Elliott said. The three have been identified as John Alva Porter, 69, of Elk City, Cleburn Hammack, 42, of Sayre, and Nora Marie Duncan, 58, of Canute, she said.

The two cars were found about three feet apart in about 12 feet of water near the lake's main concrete boat dock. A road narrows into the dock, which authorities said may explain how the vehicles ended up in the water.

(Editing by Kevin Murphy and Eric Walsh)

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Son Confesses to Killing and Defiling His Mother

CORPUS CHRISTI- Prosecutors played a shocking recording of Kevin Davis as he admitted to police detectives that he killed his mother.

This started day one of the punishment phase, this after he pled guilty to murder just as his trial was getting underway on Monday.

Davis admitted to killing his mother, Kimberly Hill, on March 27th inside her Corpus Christi apartment.

He was found at a residence on County Road 61 after he knocked on the door of a random residence, telling the person there that he needed help because he had just killed someone.

In the recorded interview with homicide detectives following his arrest, he tells in frighteningly calm detail, the manner of how he killed his mother.

He says how he tried to strangle her with the power cord of a video game console, but she was still screaming. He then quickly gets a hammer and strikes her several times in the back of the head.

Davis then tells investigators he put his hand inside her open head wound to move around her brain to ensure she was dead.

Davis says he wasn't done with his mother yet, and what he admits next is beyond decription.

He tells investigators in calm detail, that he had sexual intercourse with his dead mother. Officers ask him if that was his first time, Davis admits that was his first time and deadpans, "guess I lost my virginity to a dead corpse".

Update: On Wednesday afternoon the jury handed down a sentence of life in prison, the harshest sentence available per instructions.

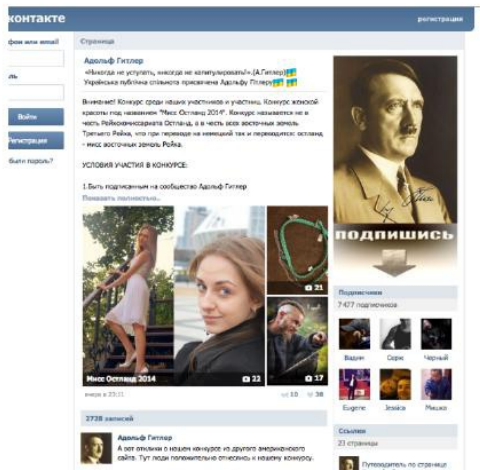
The Terrible 'Miss Hitler' Pageant Has Been Cancelled

Author: Sarah Kaufman Posted: 10/20/14 15:15 EDT Deep Web Reporting By: Vladi Vovchuk

vocativ.com

Just two days after Vocativ posted a story on a pro-Nazi VKontakte group's Miss Hitler pageant, the page hosting the competition has been taken down due to its "calls for violent actions," according to the Russian social-media site. This claim was backed up by VKontakte's head of public relations George Lobushkin in an email to Vocativ Monday.

Here's what the "Adolf Hitler" the group looked like as of October 18:



Screen Shot 2014 10 20 at 12.31.04 PM

Here's what it looks like now:



Сообщество заблокировано за призывы к насильственным действиям.

Screen Shot 2014 10 20 at 12.29.12 PM

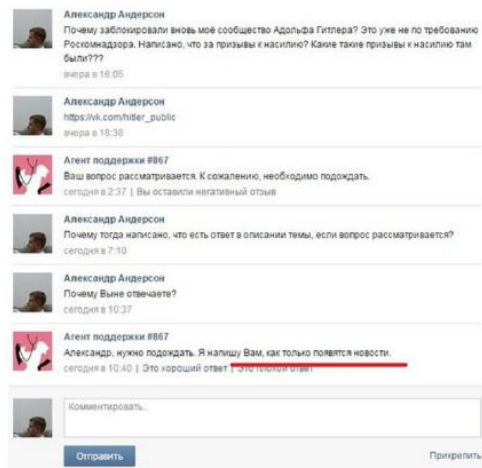
Translation: "The group has been blocked due to calls to violent actions."

Lobushkin said VKontakte's Terms of Service (link in Russian) prohibit site users from "loading, storing, publishing, disseminating, making available or otherwise using any information which: propagandizes and/or contributes to racial, religious, ethnic hatred or

hostility, propagandizes fascism or racial superiority.”

Before the page was shut down, Vocativ observed trolls commenting on the group’s threads with photos of naked black men. Unfortunately, the group was shuttered before we could take screen captures.

The creator of “Adolf Hitler,” who operates under the username Aleksandr Anderson, posted an online conversation he had with a VKontakte agent on one of his other pro-Hitler groups (also called “Adolf Hitler”). When he asks why his page was shut down, the representative doesn’t provide an answer:



Screen Shot 2014 10 20 at 12.41.38 PM

Translation: Aleksandr Anderson: Why did they block my group Adolf Hitler? It can’t be the order of Roskomnadzor. It’s written because of orders for violence? What kind of calls for violence were there???

VKontakte Agent: Your question is being looked into. Unfortunately, you have to wait.

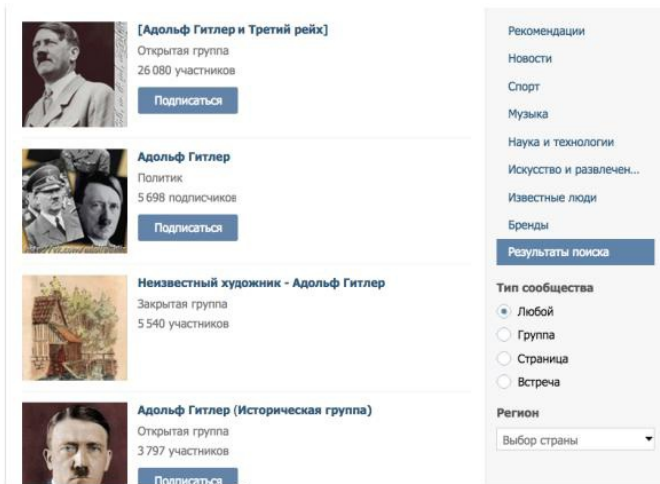
Aleksandr Anderson: Then why has there already been a response, if the question is being looked into?

Aleksandr Anderson: Why aren’t you responding?

VKontakte Agent: Aleksandr, you have to wait. I will write you when there’s news.

Roskomnadzor is Russia’s government-run media watchdog. Despite Anderson’s suspicions, Vocativ confirms that it was VKontakte, not Roskomnadzor, that made the decision to shut down the page.

Even though Miss Hitler is now on hold indefinitely, the online Russian and Ukrainian Nazi movement is still going strong. Anderson runs several other pro-Hitler VKontakte groups which all cross-post links and memes from the others. In total, VKontakte hosts around 300 pro-Hitler groups, and each one has anywhere from 5,000 to 30,000 followers.



Screen Shot 2014 10 20 at 1.06.02 PM

A search for "Hitler" on VKontakte comes up with 1,463 groups, most of which are pro-Hitler. The top result has 26,080 followers.

Despite the fact that these pages would also seem to violate VKontakte's terms of service for the same reasons as the "Adolf Hitler" group, they appeared to remain in operation upon the publication of this article.

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Stir over 'Putin' toilet paper

News from Elsewhere... media reports from around the world, found by BBC Monitoring 13:42 UK time, Monday, 06 October 2014



The locally-made toilet paper (B.B. is V.V. in the Cyrillic alphabet) has caused complaints

A brand of toilet paper is causing a stir in Crimea because its name has the same initials as Russia's president, it's been reported.

The "V.V." brand toilet paper has been criticised by customers in Simferopol because it alludes to "Vladimir Vladimirovich", the first two names of Russian President Putin, [Radio Free Europe says](#). Russia caused international anger earlier this year by annexing Crimea after Ukraine's pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich was ousted from power. Crimea's Russian majority are fiercely loyal to Moscow, and customers found the perceived link to Putin's name difficult to take, RFE reported.

The [Sevastopol News newspaper](#) said that one user was "outraged" at the fact that the maker of the product - the Simferopol Paper Mill - had included an outline of the Crimean peninsula on the roll, the implication being that the map would be put to a potentially disrespectful purpose. However, the toilet roll may just be the result of local patriotism - the packing also says "Buy Crimean!" in large letters.



Toilet rolls featuring pictures of Vladimir Putin are a popular novelty in Ukraine

Stories of Mount Misery From A Sane 23 Year Old Female

loving-long-island.com

by Samantha
(Levittown, NY)

My friends and I have been going to mt misery for years, since high school really, to get a scare. We used to read up on paranormal on the computer and get freaked out and curious so we would go drive around.

A few times it was not paranormal that scared us but real people. We had a car riding so close behind us that I had to speed up, and they followed us a long way at too high a speed for the winding roads. We were scared and were about to call the police when they suddenly veered off and left us alone on the pitch black road again.

Another time we were on Sweet Hollow road when a truck stopped dead in front of us and shut his headlights off. If you've been there you know the road is only about a car and a half wide. You have to be careful and move over at a stop to pass each other.

We didn't know if he was going to shoot us or what. I mustered the courage to try and fit around him which I did and slowly we wedged by. He stared at us the whole time and stayed there until he vanished out of sight in our rear view.

The only paranormal thing that has happened to me there was driving up to the fallen trees at the beginning of the woods at Mount Misery Road. 2 friends of mine were with me, one girl one guy.

We were just driving and talking when out of the corner of my eye, I saw a big black dog running down one of the driveways. He went right past the garbage pails on the curb and that's when I realized he wasn't stopping.

Scared I might hit him, I jammed on my brakes. That's when we heard the thud. He ran smack into the side of my car and I saw his body on the ground through the window.

We were so freaked I made our guy friend get out and see if it was dead. He walked around to the my side of the car, looked confused, walked around the back of the car, hopped in and said "GO".

I listened, headed towards Sweet Hollow Road to leave instead of continuing to the woods. We were silent until I turned on Old Country Road. That's when he told me there was nothing there, no dog.

It was unbelievable, I know what I saw, we all heard the thud. But nothing. It was crazy, weird, I felt saddened, I don't know why.

We didn't go back there for a while. A few times we went we even got out and walked, I don't recommend that, its dangerous to walk in the woods and in any area at night. Wanted to

share my stories. It's such an intriguing area. It has history. No matter what we experienced there, it always drew us back.

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Student accidentally sets college on fire during fireworks proposal

nypost.com

October 28, 2014 | 3:22pm

He popped the question — and burned down his college sports hall.

Hopeless romantic Dim Xiong Chien planned to propose to his girlfriend, Cong Yen, in explosive fashion by setting off fireworks as he got down on one knee.



The fireworks set the grass ablaze at the Liaoning Advertisement Vocational College in the city of Shenyang. Photo: Europics

Modal Trigger

His would-be betrothed didn't show up but as a last ditch effort, he set off the pyrotechnics in hopes that she'd see the fiery display, according to a report in the Express.

The plan bombed, though, when the fireworks set the grass ablaze at the Liaoning Advertisement Vocational College in the city of Shenyang.

As firefighters rushed to extinguish the massive blaze, Chien, 22, searched for his girlfriend, also 22, who forgot that he had asked her to join him for a walk.

"I was feeling a bit surprised that she hadn't shown up, and was completely unaware that the fireworks had set the grass on fire," Chien said. "When I found her I said she had to come with me as there was something important I wanted to tell her and show her."

The fiasco didn't deter Chien, who decided to postpone the proposal.

Yen said she found out later about Chien's plan but his botched romantic gesture may have cost him the respect of his potential in-laws.

"Of course, I love him, but my parents have told me to steer clear, saying he can't even ask me to marry him without causing a massive hoo-ha," she said.

The Legends and Myths of Sweet Hollow and Mount Misery: Part I, The Asylums of Mount Misery

gothichorrorstories.com



*Mount Misery, West Hills County Park,
Melville, Town of Huntington, Suffolk County,
Long Island, New York*

Mount Misery, West Hills County Park, Melville, Town of Huntington, Suffolk County, Long Island, New York

"So why have I lived my whole life on Long Island, less than twenty minutes from here, and have never heard of Mount Misery, if it's supposed to be such a paranormal hotspot?" Miss Bronwen asked, looking out over the valley below. "I've heard of West Hills County Park, I've even heard of Sweet Hollow Road, but I never heard any mention of this place until you started prattling on about it."

We were sitting atop the southern end of Mt. Misery, having entered the nature preserve across the cemetery on Sweet Hollow Road and then heading up. This is the less frequented area of West Hills County Park, south of

Northern State Parkway. The sun was setting on the afternoon before Halloween, and the autumnal leaves were taking on red and golden hues, and it was hard to believe as we looked out over what appeared to be wilderness, that we were looking out over one of the busiest highways on Long Island. The view from here is sudden and surprising, the trees hiding the numerous houses of the well to do, the park below us, the valley below seeming to be nothing but unbroken forest, rising again in the distance as Walt Whitman's West Hills.

"In short," I replied after giving it some thought, "blame it on the internet. According to legend, Mt. Misery and Sweet Hollow Road have been haunted as long as anyone can remember. Supposedly the native Americans who lived around here considered Mt. Misery no man's land. They spoke of strange lights which appeared on it, livestock disappearing on its slopes, as well as mysterious creatures spotted in the woods. Which might explain why they had no hesitation about trading it to the early settlers here. The old Indian path which is now Old Country Road was one of their main thoroughfares, and the ridge of Mt. Misery begins to rise just to the north of that. When the settlers found they had to cross it, at least according to legend, they had a hard go of it, as you saw from just hiking up here. You can imagine how tough it would be with a wagon, or carrying supplies, hence the name Mount Misery."

"So the settlers would make it back to their cabin and log on to Facebook and chat with their native American brethren then about how haunted it was? What does a bunch of pre-colonial era legends have to do with the internet?" Miss Bronwen asked with a smirk.

"Duh?" I responded. "Facebook is a new phenomenon. It would have been MySpace, or Usenet before that."

Bronwen laughed and leaned back on her elbows to watch the last sliver of sunlight wash the slopes of Jayne's Hill, the highest spot on Long Island, a short ways in the distance.

I continued, "It all seems to begin and end with Bill Knell."

"Who in the hell is Bill Knell?" she asked.

"Glad you asked," I replied. "He used to own a site called 'The UFO Guy,' and has written on a variety of bizarre topics which can be found online. And one of those is Mt. Misery. His claims include a couple of insane asylums built early on someplace on Mt. Misery, as well as a military hospital, built in the 1940s on the mount as well. In addition to that he claims it's a hotspot of UFO activity, Men in Black and even the mothman of the Mothman Prophecies fame."

"You mean that dreadful Richard Gere flick?" she asked.

"That's the one, though to be honest I kind of liked it. Okay, so they changed the historical details, the decade of the story and added fictitious characters, but it was still a decent little film. I mean for Richard Gere at least. But I digress."

I continued, "The movie is of course based on the book by John Keel, and the mothman who gets short shrift in the book is supposedly a regular on Mt. Misery. I seem to recall having read some connection between Keel's writing and Mt. Misery, but then again, I would have read it online, and much of what you read there about the place is just Knell's stuff endlessly rehashed. Including my own I might add."

Miss Bronwen zipped up her jacket and stood up, stretching. "So does he offer any evidence to back up his claims?"

"Not really," I replied. "He cites sources, but those are notoriously difficult to pin down. Much of what he writes appears to be rehashing of old legends, and perhaps – how to say this delicately – slight adjustments to geography and a jumbling of various Long Island locations. For instance, he considers this line of hills which stretch from south of Old Country Road, hell, south of the expressway I believe, to Jericho Turnpike in the north, and from Walt Whitman Road or Route 110 to Manetto Hills Road to be Mt. Misery. And displaying a staggering lack of knowledge about the area's geography, he claims that area is only a mile across in any direction, when in fact it's more like five miles."

"So when people talk about Mount Misery, they aren't talking about this particular hill," she said, gesturing at the area around us. "Instead they are talking about this whole area?"

"Not typically, no. Usually people refer to the valley down there as Sweet Hollow, which itself isn't exactly correct, and the highlands to the west of it as Mount Misery. But Knell certainly does. And for the sake of argument, I'll buy that. After all, an earlier settler coming out of the plains and seeing a ridge of hills wouldn't necessarily know the geography well enough to know what he was facing. All that would have been important to him was "ugh, big damn hill to get over." Further confusing the issue, he speaks of Mount Misery being a main route used to cross through the area, but he certainly can't mean Mt. Misery Road, as many people think. It's definitely not shown on DeWitt's map of 1802, but I do believe it's on the Traveler's Map of 1847, which seems to show both it and Sweet Hollow Road. But it really only shows

the northern most section."

"Mt. Misery Road stretches from the end of Chichester Road to the north, down to Old Country Road to the south, but it's cut in half like a snake by Northern State Parkway. If we were to hike down the trail to the west, we'd come out at the top end of the southern section, which is a water facility for Suffolk County and a day camp for children. When it starts up on the other side of the parkway, it's a dirt road for hikers and horses only for about a third of a mile, before it's once again paved. But I believe it was only a continuous road from the 19th century till the Parkway came in, and I'm guessing the section that is a dirt track never was paved. Right where the dirt track turns to pavement, at the infamous 666 log, there's a trail which goes to the east. That trail, winds through the woods a bit and picks up another dirt track, which is the culmination of Gwynne Road, which of course is paved from Sweet Hollow Road over to 110. And that I believe is the original road, the dirt trail from the Gwynne Road/Sweet Hollow intersection, and from that trail north on today's Mt. Misery Road, up to Chichester. At least that's what appears to be shown on the Traveler's Map of 1847."

"I'm guessing this isn't going to be the most exciting story you've ever told me?" Miss Bronwen asked, arching an eyebrow.

"You're guessing right," I replied. "Oddly, I started hiking here because of the wild stories, but it's the history of the place which has proven to be the most interesting mystery. Knell specifically states that Mount Misery is the highest point on Long Island, and says Jayne's Hill is the highest spot. But this area certainly isn't one big hill. Jayne's Hill, which used to be called Oakley's Hill by the earliest settlers, not Mount Misery I might add, and is officially known as High Hill, is part of West Hills. Just across Sweet Hollow Road from there is another high point, nearly as high as Jayne's Hill. And as that goes on over to Mt. Misery Road, it's my guess that might be Mount Misery itself. Sweet Hollow, West Hills and Jayne's Hill are labelled on the map, but not Mount Misery though. So that kind of pokes a hole in Knell's theory that this whole area was Mount Misery. It seems obvious that from the beginning, these were all considered separate places. It also shows, that where we are now, and where the trail comes out on Mt. Misery Road is part of Manetto Hills. In fact, the water plant up there, which is on Mt. Misery Road proper, is distinctly labelled Manetto Hills, at least legally. It's also worth mentioning, for all those EVP fans out there, that the water tower up there has a cell phone tower on it, which renders EVPs pretty much useless."

"What are EVPs?" Miss Bronwen asked. "It sounds very official."

"Electronic voice phenomenon. Or at least a phenomenon if you believe in such things, and it's important to remember in this case, at the center of the word believe is lie. Supposedly they pick up the voice of the dead, extra terrestrials and the odd random spirit. And who knows? Maybe they do. Unfortunately, we know they also pick up signals from cell towers, C.B. radios and even baby monitors. In other words, in an electronic rich area like Long Island, it's not unusual to pick up hard to explain voices and signals on a recording device. Perhaps what is most unusual is not to pick up such things."

"The map," Miss Bronwen said, guiding me back on track, "you digressed again."

"Oh yes. What's equally curious about that map is that it shows Sweet Hollow being to the east of West Hills, whereas it's currently, and as far as I know always been, to the west of West Hills. But I believe they just have the natural features wrong, as both Sweet Hollow and Mount Misery Roads seem to be in the right place otherwise. The Coyler house on the road there was built about 1819 by Walt Whitman's father, so we know the road was in existence by then, even if it was just a farm road. But we don't know how well travelled or developed those roads were. In fact, when Whitman visited the house in 1850, they reached it by hiking 'across lots,' rather than taking the roads from Jericho Turnpike. Most of the existing residences from that time, especially those built by the Whitman family, are further east of Mount Misery proper, in what would be the West Hills area. And of course that's where Route 110 eventually became the dominant north/south highway in the area. As far as Mt. Misery being a major crossroads, I just don't see it. And then there's the military hospital ..."

"Ha! I did a Google search on Mt. Misery before we came here and who should come up but you," Miss Bronwen called out triumphantly. "Are you saying now that your claim to fame is based on bogus information?"

"I believe so," I replied. "According to Knell's story, the hospital was built to care for the wounded from World War II, but there wasn't enough of a demand. It was closed down, but then reopened mysteriously in the fifties. He supposedly spoke to a fellow who was stationed in Fort Bragg, North Carolina, took sick and was sent to the hospital on Mount Misery. Most of his time was spent in a fog, then he suddenly recovered, and as he left the facilities he saw a sign which said "area 5." Back in North Carolina he was told area 5 was for psychological warfare testing, and not to ask any more questions. Of course the fellow is never named, and that's the only story he offers as evidence. He goes on to say after the hospital was closed, voices were heard coming from it, as well as lights being spotted inside. Supposedly in the seventies some teenagers broke in and fell down an elevator shaft, and were seriously injured. And after that it was torn down."

"But?" Miss Bronwen asked, leaving the question hanging in the air.

"But I can't find any evidence that there was ever a hospital here," I continued. "It's certainly not apparent on overhead photos of the area from the fifties through the eighties. It wasn't supposed to be all that large, but there aren't many places here that it could have existed. I've only spoken to a couple of locals who have heard of it, and they heard of it of course, off the internet. The only other independent mention of it that I know of was supposed to be from a project on West Hills County Park, carried out by a boy scout. Supposedly he found some oblique references to 'the hospital' in the papers of the family that donated the land for the park. But I never saw that report."

"And the other locals you've asked?" Miss Bronwen asked.

"Never heard of it," I replied. "Including several people who lived in the area all their lives. Knell and others attribute this to the fact that it's supposed to be a secret, and that the locals don't want people snooping around. The Scooby Doo theory if you will. 'We would have gotten away with it if it wasn't for those darned kids!' And it makes the whole thing seem quite eerie. The more people you ask, the higher the wall of silence becomes. Until you start to

realize, it's not a conspiracy. It's just that the story probably isn't true."



*Mount Misery, West Hills County Park,
Melville, Town of Huntington, Suffolk County,
Long Island, New York*

Mount Misery, West Hills County Park, Melville, Long Island

Miss Bronwen nodded, "And so the whole military hospital story is a fabrication?"

"I believe so," I replied. "The 1947 Huntington Town Planners Map shows no hospital. And since that was just after the end of the war, I would expect it to be on there, if it in fact existed. However, John Leita from Long Island Oddities told me his theory on it, which makes a lot of sense to me. He believes the hospital was actually Edgewood which was located in Deer Park. It was built in the forties, used as a military hospital in World War II, for the treatment of traumatized soldiers afterwards, and closed up in the seventies. I mean after all, how would a

soldier from North Carolina, unfamiliar with the area, be able to identify Mount Misery as the location he was transferred to? Unless it was called Mount Misery Hospital or some such nonsense – and there are certainly no indications there was ever a hospital or asylum with that in its name – and unless he saw the street sign, which is unlikely as he never left his room, how would he be able to identify it as such?"

"So maybe the story has an element of truth, just the wrong location?" she asked.

"Exactly. Now why Bill Knell wouldn't know this I can't say. Supposedly he knows where on Mt. Misery the hospital stood, and even stated the steps leading to the hospital are still there. I mean I spent god knows how many days looking for those steps out here, as well as other people. And no one that I've heard of has ever found anything."

"And the location you found which is listed on Google as being a possible site of the Mt. Misery Military Hospital?" she asked with a smirk.

I groaned. "Okay, so it's not the hospital. I'm more than willing to say that now. As you can see, the woods in this area is very thick. There are very few areas cleared out and large enough to have housed a facility like that. At least which doesn't already have some other structure standing on it now. When I first started looking for it, I looked at Google Earth and the satellite shots. And that location is one of the few places that I could see where it might have been. And if you look closely, you can make out a foundation there. Of course, if you actually go there, you find the vegetation is so thick you can't make it to where the foundation is. And I'm familiar with what happens in a rural area when a house or building is torn down – I'm from the midwest after all, farm country. And I'd be willing to put money, that at some point there was a rather large structure where that clearing is now. And it's located on the trail which I believe would have been the mail route where Gwynne Road meets Mt. Misery Road. If you look at aerial photos of the place all the way back to the fifties, it's been vacant all that time. Though oddly enough, even in the photos from the fifties, you can still make out that

there had been a foundation there."

"Maybe that was the older asylum that people talk about?" she asked.

"That's pretty unlikely," I answered. "According to the legends, the first asylum was built in the 1700s, which is almost certainly poppycock. A second asylum was supposedly built sometime later, but I find it hard to believe that foundations would be visible from either the eighteenth or nineteenth century. And if it was here in the twentieth century, or even the late nineteenth century, there would be records of it."

"Why do you say the asylum story is poppycock, other than you like using that word?" she asked.

"Okay, so the legend is that back in the 1700s there was a lunatic asylum built on Mount Misery. As the care for the insane was so poor, actually brutal, the story goes that it was built here, far from towns and villages so the screams of the patients wouldn't bother the locals. It was burned down by one of the inmates, the infamous Mary, with all the patients and workers inside. Some time later it was rebuilt, and once again burned down, and once more quite often blamed on the hapless Mary, though we presume a different Mary this time."

"Mary certainly was resilient," Miss Bronwen said with a grin.

"She's the legend who will not die here," I replied. "In the early 1700s, this area was part of the British colonies of course. Psychiatric care was in its infancy, and asylums were rare. Had there been one here, it would have been quite unique, and would no doubt have been documented. Typically, people cared for the mentally ill at home. It's entirely possible that there was an early farmer in the area who had one or more members of his family who suffered from mental illnesses. And perhaps, as according to the legend, the house burned down, killing all who lived there. Most myths and legends spring from some grain of truth after all. But you have to remember, during this time there was very few people living in the area. I believe in about 1800, there were only 45 residents in the area. Huntington was still small as well. New York City was a few days ride away, and of course the difficulty of getting people up Mt. Misery has already been spoken of. There simply wasn't the population here to warrant an asylum, and it was too far away from the population centers, with too poor of roads to make it feasible to send patients here."

Mount Misery.

"So there was no sanitarium on Mount Misery?" she asked, sounding a bit disappointed.

"There I believe you might be hitting on another truth. The word sanitarium. People tend to associate the word sanitarium with asylums for the insane, but in the past, this wasn't the case at all. A sanitarium was simply a place which housed people with chronic, or often, contagious diseases. And the seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were rife with epidemics of one sort or another. Cholera was a big one, scarlet fever, typhoid, influenza, all were great killers, and all spread quickly. Here's a story. Back home there was this big old abandoned house out in the country. And according to the



On Mt. Misery, West Hills County Park, Melville, Town of Huntington, Suffolk County, Long Island, New York

stories, it used to be an asylum. But eventually someone asked the right person, and found it it was in fact once used as a sanitarium for cholera patients. The family who lived there were stricken by the disease, and were quarantined. As it was a large house with lots of rooms, when other people in the area took ill with the disease, they were sent to that house as well for quarantine. Eventually, all the inmates either die or recover and were released. And as the buildings were viewed as being diseased, they were often burned."

"And I suppose it wouldn't be unheard of for the buildings to be burned with the patients still inside, if someone in the area was afraid of the disease spreading," she said with a shudder.

"Christ, I never thought of that," I replied. "Aren't you the macabre one? But you're certainly right. And it would fit in with the legends. Of course I don't know of any evidence of that happening here. That's the problem with the story of the asylums on Mt. Misery, there doesn't seem to be any evidence one way or another. There's a comprehensive list of sanitariums in operation as of 1914 and there are none listed in the area. So if there was a sanitarium here, it wasn't very large, under 20 patients, and certainly not state or public funded. A quarantine house perhaps, but nothing more."

"What about cemeteries and death records?" she asked.

"Good point. If you look at the records of Melville Cemetery on Sweet Hollow Road you do find clusters of deaths during certain periods. And one giveaway for epidemics is to look for multiple deaths among babies, infants and the very old. You find several babies and children dying in and around 1881 for instance, or 1935-36, but probably not enough to warrant a sanitarium strictly for epidemic purposes. Still, what you have to remember, is we're dealing with legends and myths. And it only takes a grain of truth to give birth to these. One large family, quarantined in their house with some deadly disease, one of the family members forgets to blow out a lamp, the house burns down, and a hundred years later the story is transformed into an insane asylum, with one of the inmates burning the place down with all the inmates and workers burned to death."

"And no historic records of asylums in the area? What about poor houses?" Miss Bronwen asked.

"Between 1650 and 1799 there are only three public asylums, or almshouses on record in the state of New York that I've found. Two in New York City and one in Albany. Between 1800 and the end of that century, the only public almshouses and asylums nearby that I can find nearby is one in Amityville, and the Jones Institute, which I believe was around Hicksville. According to its census of the time, the Jones Institute was for accomodation of the poor that came from Oyster Bay and North Hempstead. They had 'four idiots' – one male, three female,

and three who were blind. And incidently, when it was in full swing, it only had four employees. So a large asylum with lots of workers is certainly a myth. I did find mention that some of the communities of the area moved the poor or those who were considered 'idiots' into farms in rural communities, and it's possible that some of them might have found their way to farms in the Mount Misery area. But that's certainly not an asylum, and as I said, I can find no record of this happening. Just to the south and west, between Old Country Road and Round Swamp Road, which is only a few miles from here, was the Nassau County Sanitarium, which was a tuberculosis ward. And that would be in Knell's definition of Mount Misery. But that dates from the 1930s, and it certainly never burned down. Still, perhaps that somehow became the nucleus for the asylum on Mount Misery? Also in Half Hollow, which is just south of here, near Long Swamp was the almshouse of the area, but that's too far away to be considered Mount Misery. As I said, who knows?"



*Mount Misery, Manetto Hills, Melville, New York,
Halloween, 2008*

*Mount Misery, Manetto Hills, Melville, New York,
Halloween, 2008*

Miss Brownwen stood up and stretched, her arms reaching up towards the darkening sky.

"It's getting dark," she said. "And even if there were no asylums, no loonies burned alive, no mothmen and no UFOs, I don't really want to go down that hill in the pitch black."

I stood up as well and picked up our knapsack.

"I suppose you're right, but can you really think of any place more romantic to be on Halloween, than the haunted South Woods of Mount Misery?"

Miss Bronwen grinned and started back for the trail.

"Well, they say misery loves company," she said.

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IN
Memory of
**SIBBELL
LUDINGTON.**

Wife of
Edmond Ogden
WHO DIED

Feb. 26, 1839.

AGE 77 YRS 10 MO.

AND 1 DAY

by Esther Pavao

Sybil Ludington became famous for her ride to warn the Patriot militia of the British coming, similar to that of Paul Revere, but Sybil was only 16 years old.

On the night of April 26, 1777, Colonel Henry Ludington, father of 12, veteran of the French-Indian War, and commander of the militia in Dutchess County, New York, (just across the state line from Danbury, Connecticut) received a messenger to his house. The British had entered Danbury and found some American military stores, stolen some, destroyed others and drank the whiskey. Drunk, they began ransacking the town, burning and looting.

Col. Ludington's militia, some 400 men, was on furlough. Whether the colonel asked his oldest daughter or the 16-year-old bravely volunteered is unknown, but around 9 p.m., she set off in the rain to warn the men.

She completed her mission around daybreak, covering nearly 40 miles—more than twice what Paul Revere had ridden—raising 400 men, and even fighting off a highway man with her father's musket. The militia caught up with the retreating British and beat them back, too late to stop the attack, but not too late to make them pay dearly.

Alexander Hamilton wrote Col. Ludington: "I congratulate you on the Danbury expedition. The stores destroyed have been purchased at a pretty high price to the enemy."

Sybil received personal thanks from both Gen. George Washington and Gen. Rochambeau, the French commander fighting with the Americans.

Colonel Henry Ludington's memoir claims:

"One who even now rides from Carmel to Cold Spring will find rugged and dangerous roads, with lonely stretches. Imagination only can picture what it was a century and a quarter ago, on a dark night, with reckless bands of "Cowboys" and "Skinners" abroad in the land. But the child performed her task, clinging to a man's saddle, and guiding her steed with only a hempen halter, as she rode through the night, bearing the news of the sack of Danbury. There is no extravagance in comparing her ride with that of Paul Revere and its midnight message. Nor was her errand less efficient than his. By daybreak, thanks to her daring, nearly the whole regiment was mustered before her father's house at Fredericksburgh."

Statue of Sybil Ludington on Gleneida Avenue in Carmel, New York

by Anna Hyatt Huntington

public domain image, from Wikimedia Commons

A plaque underneath the statue reads:

"Sybil Ludington—Revolutionary War Heroine, April 26, 1777. Called out the volunteer militia



Sybil Ludington Statue

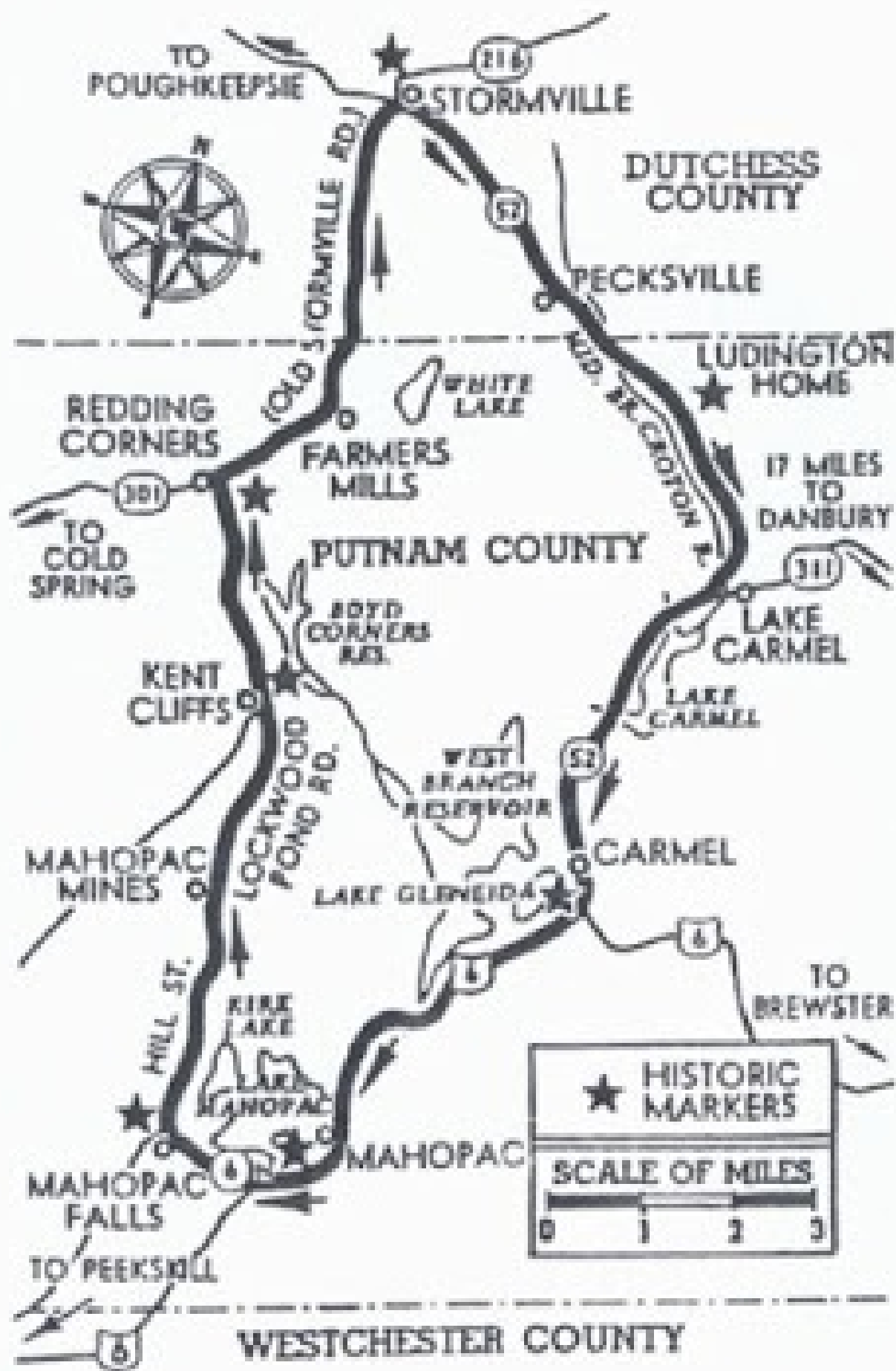
and Esther Pavao; all rights reserved

by riding through the night, alone, on horseback, at the age of 16, alerting the countryside to the burning of Danbury, Conn. by the British."

At age 23, Sybil married a farmer and innkeeper, Edward Ogden, and they had one son, Henry. She died Feb. 26, 1839, just a few days short of her 78th birthday. She is buried near her father in the old Presbyterian burying ground at Patterson, N.Y.

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The probable route of Sybil Ludington's night ride through what is now Putnam County, New York.





Photo Source: Reza Semnani



Photo Source: Reza Semnani



Photo Source: Reza Semnani

These days, dolls are easily bought from supermarkets or toy shops. They can also be easily disposed if it's just made in cheap plastic to make way for another plastic doll with a different hairdo and makeup. If we simply think about it, these are just toys that we buy to make kids entertained or have someone to talk to with a whiff of their imagination.

The dolls though in early 1900s like the bisque and celluloid dolls were precious and close to a child's heart because of their fragility and limited availability. Their importance heightened during the 2nd World War in 1939, when imported goods were extremely restricted and new dolls were no longer available in markets. And during that time in Australia, little girls had no other choice but to take their beloved dolls to a doll hospital.

Sydney's first Doll Hospital was first opened in Beamish Street, Campsie, Sydney, Australia in 1913 by Mr. Harold Chapman Sr. as a part of his general store. His brother on the other hand has a doll business. The small step began when the rubber bands of the imported celluloid dolls that hold their bodies together were perished and Harold had to repair them. The demand for doll repairs increased after this sudden start and so the business continues to operate until now.

In the 1930s, Harold's son, Harold Chapman Jr., took over and the hospital was relocated to Her Majesty's

Arcade in Sydney where they repaired items besides dolls, like leather goods and toys. Because of the strict import laws during the war, the services they offer became in demand.



Photo Source: Reza Semnani

They even needed to have 70 employees working in 6 different workrooms.

The increased demand made the hospital relocate again in 1968. That is on Stoney Creek Road in Bexley where they can have a larger building good for storing doll parts.

Now, the Doll Hospital is operated by Harold Jr.'s son, Geoff Chapman. When you visit, you'll be impressed with how they've adapted the real hospital setting. They have doctors who specialize in different doll parts like eyes,

arms, and legs. Then, they have wards meant for different kinds of repairs: pedigree dolls, plastic dolls, jointed teddy bears, pram repairs, rocking horses restorations, vinyl rag body dolls, antique dolls, celluloid dolls, ink removal, ceramic statues, and soft plush toys repairs.



Photo Source: Kate Carr

Besides doll repairs, the Doll Hospital also has a doll shop which sells regular dolls, rare collector's dolls, bears, and more.

There's also a doll dressmaker who hand-makes dresses from different eras, like crocheted gowns and lacey dresses.



Photo Source: Kaushik

So do you have a precious antique doll you've been keeping for ages? If you want to revive it back to its original, clean (or better) state then rush now to Sydney's Doll Hospital.

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Photo Source: Rachel Eddie



Photo Source: Kaushik



Photo Source: Kaushik

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Fantastically Wrong: Magellan's Strange Encounter With the 10-Foot Giants of Patagonia | WIRED

wired.com



In 1520, Ferdinand Magellan took time out of his busy schedule of sailing around the world to stop in what is now Patagonia, where he found a naked giant dancing and singing on the shore. Magellan ordered one of his men to make contact (the unwitting emissary's no doubt hilarious reaction to this sadly has been lost to history), and to be sure to reciprocate the dancing and singing to demonstrate friendship.

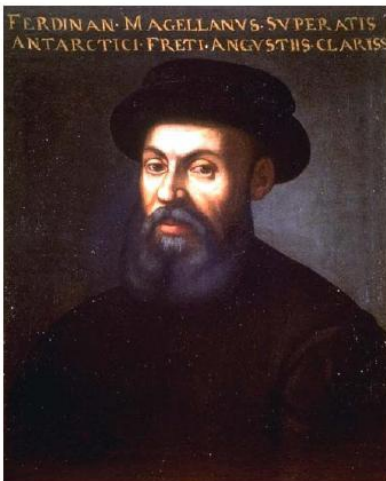
It worked. The man was able to lead the giant to a small island offshore, where the great captain waited. Describing the scene was a scholar along for the journey, Antonio Pigafetta, who kept a diary of the journey that was later turned into the book

Magellan's Voyage: A Narrative Account of the First

Circumnavigation: "When he was before us, he began to marvel

and to be afraid, and he raised one finger upward, believing that we came from heaven. And he was so tall that the tallest of us only came up to his waist," and had a big, booming voice. The illustration above proves it—Patagonia was once inhabited by giants that positively dwarfed the heavenly Europeans that would come to conquer them.

Alright, maybe that isn't airtight evidence. But it could well be that the people Magellan encountered, the Tehuelche, were indeed enormous, and that therefore this myth has some grounding in reality. And our trusty explorer would be damned if he wasn't going to try to bring back evidence in pretty much the most obnoxious way you could imagine.



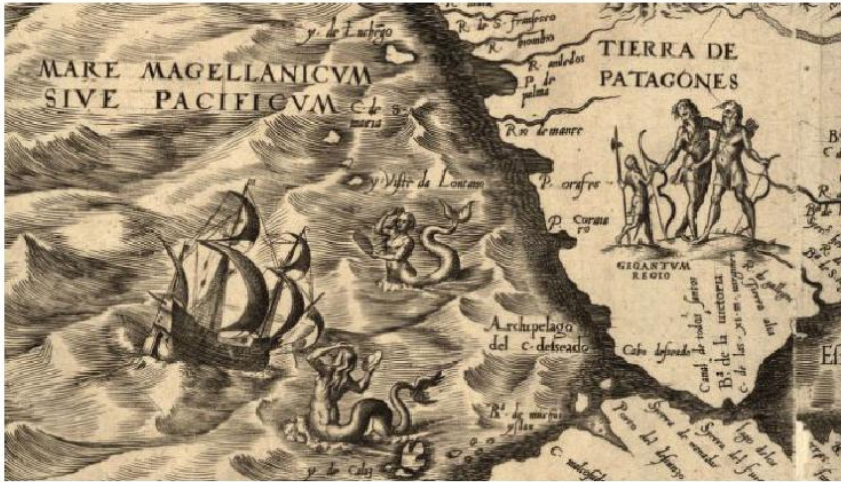
On that small island, Magellan had his men give the giant food and drink, then made the mistake of showing him a mirror.

"Wherein the giant seeing himself was greatly terrified," wrote Pigafetta, "leaping back so that he threw four of our men to the ground." But once things had calmed down, the explorers proceeded to make contact with the rest of the tribe, hunting with them and even building a house to store their provisions while onshore.

After several weeks with the tribe, Magellan hit upon a scheme: He'd kidnap two of them and take them back to Spain to prove he had discovered giants. "But this was by a cunning trick, for otherwise [the giants] would have troubled some of our men."

Magellan gave them all manner of metal goods to fool around with—mirrors, scissors, bells—so they wouldn't mind at all when he slapped cuffs and chains on their legs. "Whereat these giants took great pleasure in seeing these fetters, and did not know where they had to be put, and they were grieved that they could not take them in their hands" because their mitts already were full of other trinkets.

Magellan, though, lost his evidence during the long haul back to Spain. The giants didn't survive. But what Magellan and Pigafetta did bring back was the tale and the new name of the land of the giants, Patagonia, the etymology of which is still unclear. Some have argued it means "Land of the Big Feet," from "pata," Spanish for foot. More likely, though, Magellan picked up the name from a popular novel at the time, *Primaleon*, which featured a race of wild people called the Patagonians.



But leave it to the Brits to throw cold water on the whole thing. Sir Francis Drake later made contact with the same Patagonians, as summarized by his nephew in *The World Encompassed* from 1628 (a smackdown worth quoting at length):

"Magellan was not altogether deceived in naming these giants, for they generally differ from

the common sort of man both in stature, bigness and strength of body, as also in the hideousness of their voices: but they are nothing so monstrous and giant-like as they were represented, there being some English men as tall as the highest we could see, but peradventure the Spaniards did not think that ever any English man would come hither to reprove them, and therefore might presume the more boldly to lie."



That, as scholars put it, is a sick burn. It's also entirely right. According to William C. Sturtevant in his essay "Patagonian Giants and Baroness Hyde de Neuville's Iroquois Drawings," the Tehuelche were just a particularly statuesque people. While subsequent voyages after Magellan's measured the Patagonians up to 10 feet tall, others put them more in the 6-foot range.

"Popular interest in Patagonian giants waned as scientific reports began to appear," writes Sturtevant. "Some 19th century estimates or measurements of individuals were still high," upwards of 7 feet. But better samples of Tehuelche men brought them down to around 6 feet tall, perfectly reasonable for a human being but entirely unimpressive for a giant. "If we

accept the lowest (and least well documented) of these means based on modern measurements of males series," he adds, "the Tehuelche are nevertheless among the tallest populations known anywhere in the world." By contrast, male Europeans like Magellan in the 16th through 18th centuries would have measured in the low-5-foot range. Their

imaginations, though, apparently outgrew their small stature.

But why, then, do human beings vary so much in their height? There is of course the factor of nutrition, but a much more subtle influence is at work here.



Animals, including humans, have a tendency to grow larger in cold climates and smaller in warm ones. This is known as Bergmann's rule: With a big body, you lose heat less quickly, and are therefore better adapted to survive freezing temperatures. So it's no accident that the world's biggest terrestrial predator, the polar bear, takes to the far north, while tropical creatures, which can shed heat quicker, are better adapted to sweltering jungles. And over evolutionary time, environments can exert the same pressure on human beings. Thus would the natives of frigid Patagonia do well to grow larger than their European counterparts.

There's also the possibility that the Tehuelche man who Magellan and his crew claimed was so tall they only reached his waist suffered from a disorder of the pituitary gland. This releases runaway levels of the human growth hormone, as it did in the tallest man in recorded history, the 8-foot-11 Robert Wadlow. Indeed, the photograph above shows Robert and his 5-foot-11 father—a man far taller than the average male in the 1500s—coming up to his son's waist.

The human body, though, is simply not meant to grow to such heights. Pituitary giants typically have much shorter life spans than the average human because their hearts, even though proportionally enlarged, struggle to pump blood through their bodies. Wadlow himself had little sensation in his feet, eventually dying at just 22 from an infected blister that he never felt forming.

So even if it were possible to have an entire race of such giants, it would be a very unhealthy population indeed. Thus the giants of Patagonia remain nothing more than products of some sailors' imaginations—and maybe a little bit of scurvy. Never hurts to blame scurvy.

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The Wiyot Indians are an indigenous people of California living near the Humboldt Bay and surrounding areas. They are culturally similar to the Yurok people of California.

For several days before the massacre, World Renewal ceremonies were being held at the village of Tuluwat, on "Indian Island" less than a mile offshore from Eureka in Humboldt Bay.

Up to two hundred fifty Wiyot Indians participated in their ceremonies.

The leader of the Humboldt Bay Wiyots was Captain Jim. He organized and led the ceremony to start a new year.

Three days before the massacre, on Washington's birthday, a logging mill engineer from Germany named Robert Gunther bought the island property.

The day before the massacre, February 25th , the **Weekly Humboldt Times** wrote:

"The Indians are still killing stock of the settlers in the back country and will continue to do so until they are driven from that section, or exterminated"

Meanwhile prominent local residents had already formed a vigilante committee to deal with the problem, and were sworn to never reveal their membership.

The Wiyot Massacre took place on February 26th, 1860, at Tuluwat on what is now known as "Indian Island," near Eureka in Humboldt County, California.

Immigrant whites had settled in the area since the California Gold Rush, over the 10 years before the massacre.

The Wiyot were a peaceful tribe that had never fought with white settlers and had no reason to expect an attack.

The killings followed two years of open aggression by the whites against the residents of Indian Island, numerous editorials in the local newspapers, and the formation of volunteer militia groups.

On the night of 26th February 1860, a small group of white men crossed Humboldt Bay and to avoid drawing attention from nearby Eureka residents, some of whom may not have condoned the killings, carried out the attack primarily with hatchets, clubs and knives.

They came to the island in the early morning after the last ceremony was completed and most of the Indian men had left the island, leaving only women and children.

The whites were armed with hatchets, clubs and knives and had left most of their guns behind so the noise of the slaughter would be only screams rather than gunshots.

Contrary to a commonly held view, guns were also used to kill Indians, because some Eureka residents reported hearing shots that night, but knowledge of the attack was not widespread at the time.

Gunther had been asleep on the mainland across Humboldt Bay from the Island and had woken up to what he thought were screams, but went back to sleep.

The next morning he was awakened by the Justice of the Peace who went with Gunther to inspect the Island following reports that Indians had been killed.

He was appalled by what he saw, recalling “ ***...what a sight presented itself to our eyes. Corpses lying all around, and all women and children, but two. Most of them had their skulls split. One old Indian, who looked to be a hundred years old, had his skull split, and still he sat there shivering***”.

Gunther initially desired to bring the guilty to justice, but learned "***We soon found that we had better keep our mouths shut.***"

This was not the only massacre that took place that night.

Three other attacks on Indian settlements took place within 2 days: at the South Spit (Eureka), at South Fork Eel River (Rohnerville), and at Eagle Prairie (Rio Dell).

Gunther said, "It was never publicly known who did the killing, yet secretly the parties were pointed out."

Reports of the number of Wiyots killed that night vary from 80 to 250; they were mostly women and children, who were apart from the men conducting ceremonies. There was one survivor of the massacred group on Tutulwat, an infant called Jerry James.

News accounts report only the shooting of adult men, but that was not true.

Based upon Wiyot Tribe estimates about 250 Wiyot men, women, and children were murdered - mostly hacked to death.

Because most of the adult able-bodied men were away gathering supplies as part of continuing preparation for the World Renewal Ceremony, sort of like their Spring Festival, nearly all the Wiyot men murdered are believed to have been older men - which is believed to be one reason why the Wiyot were largely defenseless.

It is untrue to say the Wiyot were killed with ease because they were "**exhausted from the annual celebration.**" The celebration usually lasted seven to 10 days, and the men traditionally left at night for the supplies while the elders, women and children slept.

That is why most victims were children, women and older men.

Arcata's local newspaper, **the Northern Californian**, described the scene as follows:

"Blood stood in pools on all sides; the walls of the huts were stained and the grass colored red. Lying around were dead bodies of both sexes and all ages from the old man to the infant at the breast. Some had their heads split in twain by axes, others beaten into jelly with clubs, others pierced or cut to pieces with bowie knives. Some struck down as they mired; others had almost reached the water when overtaken and butchered."

Were there witnesses, survivors?

Yes, there were few survivors who watched the whole thing.

One woman, Jane Sam, survived by hiding in a trash pile. Two cousins, Matilda and Nancy Spear, hid with their three children on the west side of the island and later found seven other children still alive.

A young boy, Jerry James, was found alive in his dead mother's arms. Polly Steve was badly wounded and left for dead, but recovered.

One of the few Wiyot men on the island during the attack, Mad River Billy, jumped into the bay and swam to safety in Eureka.

Another woman, Kaiquaish (also known as Josephine Beach) and her eleven month old son William survived by not being on the island in the first place.

Kaiquaish had set out in a canoe with her son to take part in the ceremonies, but became lost in the fog and was forced to return home before the attacks began.

Coordinated attacks

The Tuluwat/Indian Island massacres was part of a coordinated simultaneous attack that targeted other nearby Wiyot sites, including an encampment on the Eel River.

The same day the same party was reported to have killed 58 more people at South Beach, about 1 mile south of Eureka even though many of the women worked for the white families and many could speak **"good English."**

On 28 February 1860, 40 more Wiyot were killed on the South Fork of the Eel River, and 35 more at Eagle Prairie a few days later.

That Didn't Matter To The Press

The Humboldt Times newspaper editorialized:

"For the past four years we have advocated two—and only two—alternatives for ridding our country of Indians: either remove them to some reservation or kill them."

The loss of life and destruction of property by the Indians for ten years past has not failed to convince every sensitive man that the two races cannot live together, and the recent desperate and bloody demonstrations on Indian Island and elsewhere is proof that the time has arrived that either the pale face or the savage must yield the ground."

One writer in nearby Union, which is now Arcata, California, was the then-unknown Bret Harte who wrote against the killers.

Harte was working as a printer's helper and assistant editor at a local newspaper at the time, and his boss was temporarily absent, leaving Harte in charge of the paper.

Harte published a detailed account condemning the event, writing:

"A more shocking and revolting spectacle never was exhibited to the eyes of a Christian and civilized people. Old women wrinkled and decrepit lay weltering in blood, their brains dashed out and dabbled with their long grey hair. Infants scarcely a span along, with their faces cloven with hatchets and their bodies ghastly with wounds."

Harte would soon need to leave the area due to the threats against his life.

Harte was threatened and in danger of mob violence. He quit his job and left Union in March 1860 by the Columbia steamer for San Francisco, where an anonymous letter published in a city paper is attributed to him, describing widespread community approval of the massacre.

While a few local citizens also wrote letters to the San Francisco papers condemning the attacks and naming suspected conspirators, local sentiment was in favor of what took place.

The Humboldt Times apparently represented the mainstream opinion in the area at the time.

An investigation failed to identify a single perpetrator, although those who did the killing were rumored to be well known. The grand jury summoned witnesses and held hearings, no one was indicted.

Yes, its true, though the attack was widely condemned in newspapers outside of Humboldt County, no one was ever prosecuted for the grisly murders.

Motive for the attacks was never clearly established, but greed for their lands and racial hatred is believed at the root of what took place.

The local sheriff, Barrant Van Ness, stated in a newspaper editorial published in the San Francisco Bulletin a few days after the massacre that the motive was revenge for cattle rustling.

Ranchers in the inland valleys claimed as much as one-eighth of their cattle had been stolen or slaughtered by Indians over the previous year and one rancher, James C. Ellison, was

killed while pursuing suspected rustlers in May 1859.

However, the area where the ranches were located was occupied by the Nongatl tribe, not the Wiyot, so the victims of the massacre would not have been responsible for any rustling.

Major Gabriel J. Rains was the Commanding Officer of Fort Humboldt at the time.

The vigilantes, calling themselves the **"Humboldt Volunteers, Second Brigade"**, had been formed in early February 1860 in the inland town of Hydesville, one of the ranching communities in the Nongatl area.

Major Rains (sometimes spelled "Raines"), reported on the massacre to his superiors that **"Captain Wright's Company of vigilantes held a meeting at Eel River and resolved to kill every peaceable Indian - man, woman, and child."**

In his army reports, appalled at the massacres and at the openly discussed aims of the local white settlers to kill the Wiyot, he stated there were 55 killed at Indian Island, 40 on South Fork Eel River, and 35 at Eagle Prairie.

South Fork Eel River became Rohnerville and was later annexed by Fortuna. Eagle Prairie is now the site of the town of Rio Dell.

Sheriff Van Ness closed his written statement by saying he did not excuse the killers for their deeds, specifically saying they spent most of February **"in the field"** attacking Indians along the Eel River.

A petition had been sent to California Governor John G. Downey asking that the Humboldt Volunteers be mustered into service and given regular pay.

Gov. Downey declined the petition, stating that the U.S. Army was sending an additional Company of Regulars to Fort Humboldt.

The Wiyot Tribe said their people were not allowed to return to the island or their other land and they often found their land stolen or destroyed.

The Wiyot people were decimated.

They were corralled at Fort Humboldt for "protection."

Soldiers from Fort Humboldt took many of the surviving Wiyot into protective custody at the fort, later transporting them to the Klamath River Reservation.

Survivors were herded mostly to Round Valley, established as an Indian reservation within California.

So what is the difference between "protective custody" and prison? Not much, because they kept escaping and returning to their homeland.

What was a tribe of a few thousand Wiyot and Karok people living within that area in 1850 changed drastically after the 1860 massacre, and by 1910 there were fewer than 100 full blood Wiyot people living within Wiyot territory.

The rapid decline in population was from disease, slavery, dieing in protective custody, being herded from place to place in what survivors' and their descendants describe as "death marches," target practice and out right murder.

Only recently has the Wiyot Indian tribe repurchased the land in order to perform their annual World Renewal Ceremony.



File:Indian Island Tolowot California.jpg

This is a view North from Woodley Island Marina at end of Startare Drive showing National Register Marker with Indian Island shell midden on other side of channel. There is no public access to Indian Island itself, it can only be seen from Samoa Bridge, Woodley Island or a boat.

Story by Tom Correa

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The Army of the Dead

A South Carolina Ghost Story

retold by

S. E. Schlosser

A laundress, newly moved to Charleston following the Civil War, found herself awakened at the stroke of twelve each night by the rumble of heavy wheels passing in the street. But she lived on a dead end street, and had no explanation for the noise. Her husband would not allow her to look out the window when she heard the sounds, telling her to leave well enough alone. Finally, she asked the woman who washed at the tub next to hers. The woman said: "What you are hearing is the Army of the Dead. They are Confederate soldiers who died in hospital without knowing that the war was over. Each night, they rise from their graves and go to reinforce Lee in Virginia to strengthen the weakened Southern forces."

The next night, the laundress slipped out of bed to watch the Army of the Dead pass. She stood spell-bound by the window as a gray fog rolled passed. Within the fog, she could see the shapes of horses, and could hear gruff human voices and the rumble of canons being dragged through the street, followed by the sound of marching feet. Foot soldiers, horsemen, ambulances, wagons and canons passed before her eyes, all shrouded in gray. After what seemed like hours, she heard a far off bugle blast, and then silence.

When the laundress came out of her daze, she found one of her arms was paralyzed. She has never done a full days washing since.

The term 'Blue Laws' describes harsh, puritanical laws that regulate public morality. Such laws supposedly existed in colonial America, making it illegal to do such things as kiss a child or shave on Sunday. But in fact, such laws probably never formally existed. The claim that they did was a hoax perpetrated by a writer in the late eighteenth century, the Reverend Samuel Peters.

The phrase 'blue laws' was first used in an anonymous pamphlet published in 1762 titled *The Real Advantages Which Ministers and People May Enjoy, Especially in the Colonies, by Conforming to the Church of England*. But Peters was the first person to list examples of such laws in a book he published in 1781 titled *A General History of Connecticut*.

In this work, Peters (who was living in London at the time) described various blue laws that had once existed in Connecticut. He claimed that it had once been the law that "every male should have his hair cut round, according to a cap," that "married persons must live together, or be imprisoned," and that "no one shall run on the Sabbath-day, walk in his garden or elsewhere, except to and from meeting [church]." The punishments for breaking these laws included excommunication, confiscation of property, fines, banishment, whipping, cutting off of the ears, burning of the tongue, or death. Moreover, Peters claimed that many of these laws still remained on the books in Connecticut.

Peters's history caused a sensation in England, where readers felt that his account of these bizarre blue laws confirmed their view that Americans were a backwards, overly fanatical lot. But New Englanders who read the book were outraged, and rightly so. Because Peters had simply made up these blue laws.

Why did Peters invent this fanciful legal history of Connecticut? There are two reasons.

First, he was a wealthy Anglican who had been forced to leave America during the Revolution. Therefore, he had no love for the Connecticut society he had left behind. He wanted to make it look as uptight and repressive as possible.

Second, Peters was dabbling in a literary genre that was only beginning to make its way into print at that time: the tall tale. Sprinkled throughout his history of Connecticut were bizarre claims, such as the assertion that the Connecticut River flowed so fast in places that it could carry a crowbar downstream. He also described a procession of frogs, four miles in length, that once descended upon the town of Windham. Clearly these 'facts' about Connecticut played fast and loose with the truth.

Peters's scheme to darken the history of his former home worked. Even today numerous references can still be found to the infamous Blue Laws of Connecticut.

- Wonham, Henry B. "In the Name of Wonder: The Emergence of Tall Narrative in American Writing," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 41, Issue 2 (June 1989): 284-307.
- Kingsley, William L. "The Blue Laws." *The New Englander and Yale Review*. April

1871, 243-304.

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this is very interesting. i grew up in harwinton, conn. back in the late 60's-70's. on sundays, my grandmother always would comment on the "blue law" meaning you couldn't purchase alcohol until noon.sure enough you couldn't. in the stores, it was always covered,until noon.

Posted by kathy mahoney in canoga park ca on Fri Jul 09, 2004 at 12:25 AM

You can't buy liquor on a Sunday in Ct at all. CT and mass both have many,many blue laws. One massacussetts blue law makes it illegal for a horse to graze on the front lawn on a Sunday. The only time and place I saw this was in Mass on a Sunday! Needless to say these laws are generally forgotten or ignored by most.

Posted by pfd in ct on Sun Feb 13, 2005 at 07:53 AM

Alex, I wouldn't be so quick to dismiss claims of water moving a crowbar. You are welcome to visit my home on the Pike Creek, where you can watch a small east coast creek (~8' wide in the narrows) push Victorian-era cast-iron steam radiators down stream whenever it floods. The rains that followed hurricane Jeanne (?) recently pushed one about 40 feet!

I've never visited the Connecticut River personally, though, so I can't testify to the volume or speed of the water. However, some fairly respectable authorities claim it to be a rather large river that runs over 400 miles and crosses the fall line of the east coast, and that it normally moves quite a few multi-ton objects (called hydroelectric generators) without a lot of fuss.

That whapperknocker, though, I think that's a hoax.

Posted by CHarlie on Fri Mar 04, 2005 at 04:57 PM

On Wensdays and Friday we couldn't bark at dogs or we would be fined \$100

Posted by Tasha McKenna in Torrington CT on Wed Apr 27, 2005 at 10:39 AM

I grew up in CT. The one blue law I remember was that it was illegal to drive a car barefoot. It was still illegal when I moved in 1980, though they may have repealed it since then. Maybe this is why I like to drive barefoot on long road trips!

Posted by Chris on Thu Apr 06, 2006 at 02:58 PM

I have a book from the late sixteen hundreds.

It is called Connecticut Blue Laws.It lists all sorts of strange crazy laws I bet you would like to see it .Very very fragile....

Posted by John in Blackstone Ma. on Mon Dec 18, 2006 at 06:49 PM

We sure would like to see it!

SCAN THAT BABY!

You may have the last surviving copy of that book, so you ought to put it on the web where others can see it without physically handling it.

Posted by CHarlie on Tue Dec 19, 2006 at 09:41 AM

Although I am certainly no authoritative source, I remember a discussion of this as a sociological phenomenon, exploited to varying degrees. For instance, saying that it is illegal to walk a squirrel on a leash down Main Street in Little Rock, Arkansas may have a basis in

fact: it may be against local health codes to expose your pet rodent in public under any circumstances. Citing an odd specific instance gives the impression that persons walking their squirrels in Little Rock became such a problem that it required legislation.

Fundamentally, anything that sounds remotely believable and tends to support a bias or prejudice becomes accepted.

Posted by Mike Burtner in Indianapolis, Indiana, USA on Sat Jul 14, 2007 at 07:49 PM

As someone who grew up on Connecticut during the 40's and 50's I have witnessed that long line of frogs on the road. Perhaps not 4 miles in length but assuredly considerably longer than one mile.

Posted by Paul Millette in St Augustine, FL on Tue Mar 04, 2008 at 08:31 AM

One Blue Law I would like to see repealed is the ban on Sunday hunting. There are few weekends that hunters are allowed to hunt (pheasant from mid Oct to Dec) and most everything ends in Feb. Most people only have the weekend to hunt since they work during the week. If it rains on Saturday, they're out of luck for the week. If they want to calm down the woods for a day as some claim, make it a weekday. There's no one out there anyway. Hunting is also restricted to very few locations in CT, so it would not impact most hikers and non-hunters. It might even get some kids away from their video games for a few hours. I see no legitimate reason for this law to still be on the books.

Posted by BR in Hartford, CT on Fri Mar 12, 2010 at 06:46 AM

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The Bunny Man Unmasked: The Real Life Origins of an Urban Legend

By
Brian A. Conley, Historian-Archivist
Fairfax County Public Library

Introduction

There is a story that a man dressed as a bunny haunts the residential neighborhoods around our nation's capital. Silly as this may sound at first, the Bunny Man has been a fixture of local legend for at least 30 years. By 1973 the so-called "Bunny Man" had been reported in Maryland, and the District of Columbia. His infrequent and widespread appearances tended to occur in secluded locations and usually tell of a figure clad in a white bunny suit armed with an ax threatening children or vandalizing property. By the 1980s the Bunny Man had become an even more sinister figure with several gruesome murders to his credit. Although he has been reported as far south as Culpepper, Virginia, his main haunt has been the area surrounding a railroad overpass near Fairfax Station, Virginia frequented by party goers, the now infamous "Bunny Man Bridge."

The Legend

For more than 25 years stories of the Bunny Man have been kept alive primarily amongst our teenage population. Over the years the story has evolved into a ghost story suitable for parties, camp outs, and any occasion that such tales are exchanged. It was at one such gathering in 1976 that the author first heard it told. The Bunny Man was said to be responsible for the deaths of two disobedient children in the Clifton area. Others were rumored to have disappeared, and there was talk of animals found horribly mutilated. I never saw the Bunny Man myself, but then I never strayed into the woods at night, especially not near the Bridge...

Most childhood ghost stories are forgotten as one gets older. However, the Bunny Man followed me. After graduating from college, I accepted a position with the Fairfax County Public Library, eventually becoming an Information Specialist in the Virginia Room. One day around 1992 a very well-spoken young lady came into the Virginia Room with a question. She wanted to know how she could find information on a murder that was supposed to have taken place near her home. As I interviewed the patron to ascertain what hard facts she had to go on, some vague memory nagged at me. Two children were allegedly murdered by a local hermit for trespassing, and their bodies left hanging from a covered bridge. She had no names and only a vague idea of a time frame. The whole story seemed a little fantastic, but the thing that really bothered her was the guy was supposed to be an escaped inmate dressed in a bunny suit. At this point, even though the story had evolved a bit, I recognized the tale from my own youth. We were unable to confirm any of the elements of the story as she or I had first heard it, and I put it down in my mind as a story fabricated to scare children.

I likely would have forgotten about the Bunny Man again if the questions didn't begin coming on a regular basis. The Bunny Man has actually begun appearing in print in recent years, having been mentioned in several high school newspapers,¹ and more recently, on the Internet. The various Internet versions have carried the story to new heights. The most widely circulated written version entitled *The Clifton Bunny Man* and signed by Timothy C. Forbes, Virginia, was posted on a Web site called *Castle of Spirits* around 1999.² This version of the tale is actually quite notable because of the number of specific facts given. Forbes claims that in 1904 inmates from an insane asylum escaped while being transferred to Lorton Prison. One of these escapees, Douglas J. Grifon, murdered fellow escapee Marcus Wallster and eventually became the Bunny Man. Not only is the location identified, but also the names of several victims and the dates of their murders. The story ends with a challenge for the reader to check with the Clifton Town Library for verification of the facts.

Little effort was required to show that all of the specifics given in the Forbes version are false. First, there has never been an asylum for the insane in Fairfax County. Second, Lorton Prison didn't come into existence until 1910, and even then it was an arm of the District of Columbia Corrections system, not Virginia's. Third, neither Grifon nor Wallster appear in the court records of Fairfax County. Lastly, there is not and never has been a Clifton Town Library.

The story also received wide recognition after being featured on national television. The program called *Scariest Places on Earth*, broadcast on the Fox Family Channel, included a segment entitled "Terror on Bunnyman's Bridge" in the 2001 broadcast season.³

Even though these fictional tales of spectacular crimes are easy to dismiss as fiction, the question of the story's origin is not. Was the Bunny Man real? At first I was content to dismiss the Bunny Man as completely fictitious, however I have learned that many legends do have some basis in factual events. At the urging of a fellow employee I finally began a more serious search for the Bunny Man. I began with a few basic assumptions. First, although the tale is told in jurisdictions all around the Washington, D. C. area, the bulk of them take place in Fairfax County. Second, any event that gains as much notoriety as this one must have been originally reported to the public. Third, the original event was probably criminal in nature.

Was the Bunny Man a murderer?

The aspect of the story which gets the most attention are the alleged murders. Researching historical crimes can be very difficult unless you have some basic facts to begin with. Since police records are not available for casual review and court records are indexed by the names of those involved, not by location or type of crime, I had to begin by checking the local newspapers. The tool that has proved the most valuable was the Fairfax County Public Library [Historical Newspaper](#)

Index.⁴ Virginia Room volunteers Malcolm Richardson and Barbara Welch worked for 10 years to compile a complete index to local Fairfax County newspapers. The careful work of these two, combined with the searching capabilities of a computer database, allowed us to extract every murder and killing reported by the local press from 1872 through 1973. Even though Fairfax County was a rural farming community until well into the 20th century there were over 550 individual mentions of killings in the study period. Eliminating "run of the mill" domestic murders and concentrating on multiple murders and those involving children (both of which were mercifully rare) served to pare down a list of more than 500 possible events to the following three:

1) Frances and June Holober: February 1949

It would be hard to imagine a more disturbing event for a growing community like Fairfax than the gruesome murders of 37-year-old Frances Holober and her eight-month-old daughter, June. On Thursday February 24, 1949 Mrs. Holober and her daughter drove to Fairfax County in the company of her estranged husband Charles. All were residents of the District of Columbia. Charles Holober later told police that they had come to see the new lodge at a nudist colony to which Mr. Holober belonged.

Upon leaving the lodge the car became mired in some mud. The couple quarreled and Mrs. Holober took the child and walked away from her husband and never returned. Charles Holober spent the night in the car and got a ride back to Washington the next day. He returned with his brother-in-law and a friend to retrieve the car. Still finding no evidence of his family, the police were finally notified.⁵ An intensive search of the area was organized involving Fairfax County Police, Washington Detectives, and Boy Scouts.

About 5:00 p.m., just as the searchers were about to give up for the night, one of the detectives noted that the ground on which they were standing was very soft. Both mother and daughter were found in a shallow grave next to the lodge and less than 200 yards from where Charles Holober's car had been stuck. Frances Holober had been beaten and then shot once in the head and once in the heart. The baby girl had been buried alive.⁶

The local community was shocked and horrified by the cold brutal character of the crime, especially when the investigation identified Charles Holober as the prime suspect. Holober later confessed to investigators that he had planned the murder for three weeks and had not intended to report the disappearance of his wife, but changed his plan when the car got caught in the mud.⁷ The case came to trial on January 16, 1950. After hearing four days of testimony the jury returned a verdict of guilty, and Holober was sentenced to die in the electric chair.⁸ Holober's attorney, T. Brooke Howard, filed an appeal alleging that the jury failed to give proper consideration to the plea of insanity, and that the Court made errors in its instruction to the jury.⁹

The Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals eventually overturned the conviction and ordered a new trial. Charles Francis Holober was re-committed to the Western State Mental Hospital at Marion, Virginia, where he was judged to be insane.¹⁰ It is interesting to note that this was the first time since the Ridgeway Murder Trial of 1927 in which a Fairfax County jury invoked the death penalty.¹¹

2) Minnie, Loretta and Catherine Ridgeway: March 1927

The available newspapers record many murders, but few shocked Fairfax like the ferocious and senseless attack on Mrs. Minnie Ridgeway and her two young daughters. Mrs. Ridgeway lived with her husband and three children on Telegraph Road in Alexandria. Sometime on the morning of March 4, 1927, a man later identified as Louis Boersig called at the home on the pretext of seeing Mr. Ridgeway. Upon finding that he was not at home, Boersig attacked and beat Minnie Ridgeway into unconsciousness and then likewise bludgeoned her daughters Loretta, 7, and Catherine, 5. He then stole money from the home and fled.

The crime was discovered by a neighbor who heard moans coming from inside the house. All three victims were taken to Alexandria Hospital, where Loretta later died. Catherine Ridgeway lived another eight days before succumbing to her injuries. Minnie recovered and was able to identify the assailant, who was known to the Ridgeways. Boersig was arrested at his home and transferred to the jail in Winchester for his safety.¹²

Louis Boersig was executed for the murders of Loretta and Catherine Ridgeway on July 7, 1927, just three months after his horrific crime.¹³

3) Eva Roy: August 1918

Peter Roy was a Danish immigrant who had come to Fairfax from Minnesota in 1912. In November of that year he purchased two parcels of land near the current intersection of Old Keene Mill Road and Sydenstricker Road, totaling 180 acres.¹⁴ Roy, a widower, became a prosperous farmer and an active member of the Lee Chapel Methodist Church. With him resided his eldest daughter Caroline, her husband William K. Jerman, and his younger daughter Eva.

On the morning of Aug. 4, 1918, Eva Roy, age 14, left her home near Burke, at around 9:00 a.m. to tend her father's small herd of cows. When Eva failed to return home that evening her father began a search. Neighbors were soon enlisted to help, but it was some 24 hours later that her body was found tied to a tree in the woods near the old Hanse House, her apron strings tight about her throat. The county coroner, Dr. W. I. Robey, concluded that the girl had been "Brutally assaulted" before being strangled to death.¹⁵ A Coroner's Jury was appointed, and quickly concluded: "We, the jury, find that Eva Roy

came to her death at the hands of some unknown person, and the indications point to Lu Hall, as the probable perpetrator of the crime."¹⁶ Hall, a 33-year-old woodcutter, lived about 1/2 mile from the scene of the crime and was seen in the woods near the time of the girl's disappearance.

The case was not to be easily solved, however, as other suspects were soon identified and eventually eliminated.

The first, William Wooster, age 16, was soon arrested for assaulting a "colored girl." He had recently been released from an insane asylum, but was found that he was nowhere near the scene of Eva's murder.¹⁷

The next suspect to emerge was a soldier who deserted from Camp A. A. Humphries (now Fort Belvoir). The soldier, a sergeant whom the papers fail to name, was located some days later near Charlottesville, Virginia. He had scratches on his face and hands, was wearing freshly laundered clothes, and claimed to have no memory of the events between his leaving Camp Humphries and his capture. Sheriff Allison traveled to Charlottesville to interview the man, but after some weeks of investigation determined that he was not connected with the crime.¹⁸

The lagging investigation seemed to finally receive a break with the apprehension of Ben Ruben, an escaped inmate from Lorton Prison. Ruben, who had been serving a three-year sentence for housebreaking,¹⁹ was arrested by Washington, D. C. police on September 19 for assaulting a little girl. While on the way to the police station he confessed to Eva's murder. Ruben claimed "he met Eva Roy, looking after her father's cows. He asked her for food and in a conversation with her he told her he was an ex-convict. She declared she would 'turn him up' as he declared, and he became excited and choked her."²⁰ The Washington authorities were unconvinced by Ruben's story and wanted to try him for assault and theft before turning him over to the Virginia courts. An investigator sent by the Commonwealth of Virginia to interview Ruben concluded that he was not responsible for the crime, but extradition papers were filed anyway.²¹ On September 26 Ruben was escorted to the scene of the crime by Sheriff Allison, Commonwealth Attorney C. Vernon Ford, Assistant Commonwealth Attorney Wilson M. Farr, Dr. Swetnam, and acting counsel for the defense F. D. Richardson.²² After being unable to locate the scene of the attack or the tree where the body was left, Ruben denied killing Eva. He claimed the presence of the girl's father spurred him to recant his confession. Ruben's motive for confessing was revealed some weeks later when on October 6 he escaped from the jail in Fairfax. He was arrested two days later while attempting to buy a pistol and admitted that he concocted his story in order to be transferred to Fairfax, where he thought escape would be easier.²³ He was eventually convicted of burglary and escape from jail and was sentenced to four more years in prison.²⁴

Lou Hall was finally tried for the murder in Fairfax County Court. The prosecution was handled by State's Attorney C. Vernon Ford, assisted by Wilson M. Farr. The defense was provided by Walter T. Oliver. His first trial resulted in a hung jury with nine votes for guilty, three for innocent.²⁵ His second trial resulted in a clear verdict of "Not Guilty."²⁶

Peter Roy died on January 22, 1938, and was interred in Lee Chapel Cemetery next to his youngest daughter.²⁷ Her murderer was never found.

After scrutinizing the three preceding events I concluded that none are likely candidates for the Bunny Man. Charles Holober was caught and incarcerated. Louis Boersig was caught and summarily executed, and the murder of Eva Roy, even though it has many of the elements that a legend could build upon, is simply too old. This last assertion is based upon one other important factor that has emerged through my research. The Bunny Man, like any good legend, has evolved over time. The recent rash of persons researching the origins of this story have been largely attracted by the spectacular nature of the alleged crime. The previously cited Forbes version of the story features 32 victims and has a pronounced supernatural element. This contrasts sharply with versions of the tale I collected from the 1980s which generally involved only one to three victims, usually children. More importantly, the earliest versions (dating to the 1970s) did not mention any deaths at all. These earliest versions recount acts of vandalism (usually against secluded residential construction sites) or couples parked at secluded "Lovers Lane", type locations being accosted/threatened by a strange individual dressed in a white Bunny costume. More research was clearly needed.

Fact vs. Folklore

After nearly eight years of research I finally got a solid lead. The November 11, 2000 *Washington Post*²⁸ ran an article highlighting an interesting collection called the Maryland Folklore Archive. From the 1950s through c. 1990, students at three Maryland universities collected, researched, and transcribed numerous local legends. This material has finally come to rest in the holdings of the University of Maryland. In 1973, University of Maryland student Patricia Johnson submitted a paper titled "The Bunny Man."²⁹ This paper was compiled as part of the course work for a class entitled Introduction to Folklore (English 460). She interviewed 33 students from Prince Georges County, Maryland ages 15 to 18.

Ms. Johnson relates that the tale met all of the qualifications of an Urban Belief Tale.³⁰ Specifically, it (1) takes place in an urban setting, (2) existed prior to her project, and (3) had appeared in print as truth. She goes on to state "included in this collection is an article from the *Washington Post* which verifies the story as truth."³¹ This was an important claim as I had found no primary sources to date. I was extremely frustrated to find that the page containing the referenced article was missing from the original paper. With any hope of a quick resolution gone, I turned to examining the paper itself. Johnson's informants told 54 variations of the story. A rough tally revealed the following:

- a. Fourteen different geographic locations are mentioned

- b. Eighteen involve the Bunny Man chasing or frightening people, usually children, with a hatchet or ax
- c. Fourteen tell of attacks on cars
- d. Nine claim he attacked a couple parked in a car
- e. Five accuse him of vandalism on homes or buildings
- f. Only three mentioned a murder

Based on the widespread geographic locations and the significant variation represented in the tales Johnson concluded that the Bunny Man was an Urban Belief Tale. In short, the Bunny Man did not exist.

The Breakthrough

After re-reading Johnson's paper several times I finally noted that she heard the tale for the first time around Halloween 1970. Having no better leads I began a systematic search of the *Washington Post* for October of that year in hopes of finding the previously cited news article. I was elated (and not a little surprised) to find the following:

*Man in Bunny Suit Sought in Fairfax*³³

Fairfax County police said yesterday they are looking for a man who likes to wear "white bunny rabbit costume" and throw hatchets through car windows. Honest.

Air Force Academy Cadet Robert Bennett told police that shortly after midnight last Sunday he and his fiancée were sitting in a car in the 5400 block of Guinea Road when a man "dressed in a white suit with long bunny ears" ran from the nearby bushes and shouted: "You're on private property and I have your tag number."

The "Rabbit" threw a wooden-handled hatchet through the right front car window, the first-year cadet told police. As soon as he threw the hatchet, the "rabbit" skipped off into the night, police said. Bennett and his fiancée were not injured.

Police say they have the hatchet, but no other clues in the case. They say Bennett was visiting an uncle, who lives across the street from the spot where the car was parked. The cadet was in the area to attend last weekend's Air Force-Navy football game.

When I began this project the aspect that puzzled me most was the bunny suit. I expected to find that the legend was spawned by an event that was strange or in some way notable, but I never suspected the Bunny Man really was a "Bunny Man." I was even further surprised to find a second appearance recorded two weeks later:

*The "Rabbit" Reappears*³⁴

A man wearing a furry rabbit suit with two long ears appeared — again — on Guinea Road in Fairfax County Thursday night, police reported, this time wielding an ax and chopping away at a roof support on a new house.

Less than two weeks ago a man wearing what was described as a rabbit suit accused two persons in a parked car of trespassing and heaved a hatchet through a closed window of the car at 5400 Guinea Rd. They were not hurt.

Thursday night's rabbit, wearing a suit described as gray, black and white, was spotted a block away at 5307 Guinea Rd.

Paul Phillips, a private security guard for a construction company, said he saw the "rabbit" standing on the front porch of a new, but unoccupied house.

"I started talking to him," Phillips said, "and that's when he started chopping."

"All you people trespass around here," Phillips said the "Rabbit" told him as he whacked eight gashes in the pole. "If you don't get out of here, I'm going to bust you on the head."

Phillips said he walked back to his car to get to get his handgun, but the "Rabbit", carrying the long-handled ax, ran off into the woods.

The security guard said the man was about 5-feet-8, 160 pounds and appeared to be in his early 20s.

Two documented appearances by a bunny-suited figure in the same Fairfax County community. Was this the Bunny Man or just copy-cats acting out stories they had heard from somewhere else? I again turned to Johnson's paper for clues. As mentioned earlier 14 of her tales mention a couple in a parked car being attacked, but nine of these specifically mention a hatchet being thrown into the car. Of the five mentioning vandalism, two describe "columns" being chopped. The story told by 17-year-old G. Taylor was particularly revealing. She related:

"I think it was last year or maybe before that. I came home from school. I was listening to the news. I had just gotten in and I heard there was a man and a woman sitting in a car. It could have been teenagers, but they were just parked and all. And all of a sudden, they looked up and there was this bunny. You know, this giant bunny just ran out of the woods, you know, from behind the trees and all. And he ran in front of the car. And he had a hatchet, and he threw it through the car and just turned around and went back away. They were just shocked. They just sat there and watched. Then an old man came out of the house and warned them to get off of his property. You know, they tried to explain and everything but he just wouldn't listen. And then, they took it to the police afterwards. And the police, you know, went back and all and asked him if he had seen

anything. And nobody had seen it. Until a couple of days later, then a lot of people were saying that they had seen the bunny man. And then, after that, the police tried to investigate, but they couldn't get anything. And then they found these places that sell costumes and all. And they found that it hadn't been but three people that had ... Uhm ... Bought costumes. Then they, you know, long put theirs away and brought them back and all. And it wasn't them. And nobody every found out about the bunny man. It just went on for a couple of weeks and then it died out."³⁵

Miss Taylor's recollections are important for a number of reasons. First, she identifies the television news as her source of information. Second, she accurately relates the hatchet thrown into the occupied car, the teenage couple, the accusation of trespassing, and police involvement. Third, she states that it went on for "a couple of weeks" then stopped. Lastly, she identifies the time frame to within six months. The October 22 news story is clearly the origin of the tale she told. Moreover, although the story had mutated noticeably in 22 years, many of Johnson's 53 other versions also contain recognizable elements of the October 1970 incidents. Newspapers accounts and oral reports can be revealing, but neither can be trusted to be completely accurate. It was time to look for more trustworthy records.

Official Reports

The Fairfax County Police Department has no official record of the October 18 assault on Robert Bennett and his fiancé, but they do have an Investigation Report relating to the October 29 vandalism incident. Although FCPD is not required to release any information relating to misdemeanor offenses, they kindly supplied a redacted³⁶ copy of the report for this project.

The investigation report confirms the basics of the event as told in the October 31 *Washington Post* article. At 10:30 p.m. on October 29, 1970 six officers responded to 5307 Guinea Road for "a subject dressed as a Rabbit with an Ax."³⁷ The officers found no rabbit and the case was turned over to Investigator W. L. Johnson of the Criminal Investigation Bureau.

Johnson began with a visit to the construction offices of the Kings Park West Subdivision on October 31. He found no rabbit, but did receive a call shortly after his visit from someone who worked at Kings Park West.³⁸ The caller claimed to have just received a telephone call from someone identifying himself as "the Axe Man." The Axe Man allegedly said "Mr. _____, you have been messing up my property, by dumping tree stumps, limbs and brush, and other things on the property." The Axe Man further stated that "you can make everything right, by meeting me tonight and talking about the situation." The representative from Kings Park West stated that the caller sounded to be a white male in his late teens or early 20s. The police set up a stake out, but the "Axe Man" never materialized.

On November 4, Investigator Johnson received a call from a resident of the area who informed him that her son claimed to know the identity of the "Bunny Man." She stated that some of the neighborhood children "who have seen or been with the Bunny Man" described him as an older teenager. Johnson interviewed the son (age 8) and eventually learned that he had not actually met the Bunny Man but "had only heard of the Bunny Man at school, from the rest of the children talking about him."³⁹ Interviews with other neighborhood children had similar results.

On March 14, 1971 Johnson wrote the following summary:

"After a very extensive investigation into this and all other cases of this same nature,⁴⁰ it is still unsubstantiated as to whether or not there really is a white rabbit.

The only people who have seen this so-called white rabbit have been children of rather young ages, and the complainant in this case.

Upon interviewing every one in this case that may have had any knowledge of any incidents concerning a white rabbit, that has been no significant information uncovered that would lead to the identity of the person or persons that were posing as a white rabbit.

This case will be marked as inactive."⁴¹

His Identity?

Who was the Bunny Man, and what was he trying to accomplish? Sadly, we will likely never know his identity. Likewise his true motivations are known only to himself, but there are a few clues contained in the foregoing sources. On October 18 the Bunny Man accused Robert Bennett of trespassing.⁴² On October 29 the Bunny Man told security guard Paul Phillips that "You all trespass around here."⁴³ and on November 4, the self-styled "Axe Man" accused the unnamed representative of Kings Park West Subdivision of dumping debris on his property.⁴⁴ If we assume that all three incidents involved the same individual, then it appears that this young man was disturbed by the development of the area. Said development was extensive in 1970, too. Until the second World War Fairfax County was a rural farming community. The build-up of Federal employment in the region fueled intensive residential development in the closer suburbs of Arlington and Fairfax Counties. The 1950s saw tract housing being built in Springfield, McLean, Annandale, and Fairfax. The somewhat modest developments of the early 1960s eventually gave rise to near town-size projects like Reston and Burke Centre.

Kings Park West is a subdivision of over 1500 homes, and was one of several such developments either built or under consideration for the Burke area at the time of the incidents. James W. Robinson Secondary⁴⁵ School opened the next year with nearly 3,900 students. While Fairfax County began to look seriously at land use planning issues in the 1950s, the first countywide Comprehensive Land Use Plan was not adopted until 1975. Many people living in Fairfax County in the 1960s

and '70s were disturbed to see pastures and woods giving way to roads, subdivisions, and shopping centers. Being forced to watch helplessly while the face of your community changes around you can elicit strange behavior in some people.

And what was the significance of the bunny costume? I am not prepared to even hazard a guess.

Conclusion

Who the Bunny Man was and what motivated him to act in such a bizarre manner is still a mystery, however, the available evidence points to the October 1970 events as the genesis of the Bunny Man legend. Many of the tales collected by Patricia Johnson in 1973 clearly derive from the events as reported in the newspaper and the television news of that period. The official police report makes no mention of any pre-existing stories that this individual could have been copying. Furthermore, William L. Johnson specifically stated to the author that he found no indications of any earlier stories or criminal incidents involving an individual dressed as a rabbit.⁴⁶

It is also plainly evident that the story began to take on the features of an urban legend quite soon after the events were reported. Investigator Johnson was following leads generated by school-yard rumors less than two weeks after the first appearance of the Bunny Man, and by the time Patricia Johnson began her work two-and-a-half years later, the story had mutated in location, frequency, and severity.

And there you have one interpretation of the story.

¹**A-Blast**, Annandale High School, Mar. 14, 1997 & **Orange Peel**, Hayfield Secondary School, Oct. 17, 1997.

²<http://www.castleofspirits.com/clifton.html>

³Scariest Places on Earth. Episode 7. 2001.

⁴The Historical Newspaper Index can be accessed at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/vr/newsindex/. Printed indexes to the **Washington Post** are available from 1971 to present, and their online Archives (www.washingtonpost.com) contains articles from 1977 to the present, but these sources were not helpful at this phase of the project.

⁵Posse Fails to Find Lost Mother, Baby. **Washington Post**, Feb. 27, 1949, 6M

⁶Wife and Baby Found Buried; Mate is Seized. **Washington Post**, Feb. 28, 1949, A1

⁷**Fifty Years Behind the Badge**, Fairfax County Police Department, 1990. Side bar P.31

⁸Appeal in Holober Case Uncertain, **Fairfax Herald**, Jan. 27, 1950, P.1

⁹Holober Appeal Granted. **Fairfax Herald**, June 16, 1950, P.1

¹⁰Holober Sent to State Hospital. **Fairfax Herald**, Mar. 16, 1951, P.1

¹¹Holober to Have New Trial. **Fairfax Herald**, Jan. 19, 1951, P.1

¹²Makes Admission. **Fairfax Herald**, Mar. 11, 1951, P.5

¹³Paid Penalty. **Fairfax Herald**, July 8, 1951, P.2

¹⁴Sallie E. Stepp to Peter Roy (Db O7:208) & J. T. Van Sickler to Peter Roy (Db O7:451)

¹⁵Dastardly Crime. **Fairfax Herald**, Aug. 9, 1918, P.3

¹⁶Untitled handwritten document, Fairfax County Circuit Court Archives.

¹⁷No Clew Yet. **Fairfax Herald**, Aug. 16, 1918, P.3

¹⁸The Roy Case. **Fairfax Herald**, Aug. 30, 1918, P.3

¹⁹Confesses to Crime. **Alexandria Gazette**, Sept. 20, 1918, P.1

²⁰To Undergo Grueling. **Alexandria Gazette**, Sept. 21, 1918, P.1

²¹Still Hold Ruben. **Alexandria Gazette**, Sept. 25, 1918, P.1

²²Recants Confession. **Alexandria Gazette**, Sept. 27, 1918, P.1

- ²³Ruben Again in Custody. **Alexandria Gazette**, Oct. 9, 1918, P.1
- ²⁴Ben Ruben Sentenced. **Fairfax Herald**, Jan. 17, 1919, P.3
- ²⁵No Verdict Found. **Fairfax Herald**, Nov. 29, 1918, P.3
- ²⁶Hall Acquitted. **Fairfax Herald**, Mar. 28, 1919, P.3
- ²⁷Obituary of Peter Roy. **Fairfax Herald**, Jan. 28, 1938, P.1
- ²⁸Reel, Monte, Famed Goatman Forever Held in Dusty Room. **Washington Post**, Nov., 11, 2000, B4.
- ²⁹Johnson, Patricia C. **The Bunny Man** (May 12, 1973). Maryland Folklore Archive, Box 32. Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries, College Park, Md.
- ³⁰Johnson, P.2.
- ³¹Johnson, P.2.
- ³³Man in Bunny Suit Sought in Fairfax. **Washington Post**. Oct. 22, 1970, B2.
- ³⁴The "Rabbit" Reappears. **Washington Post**. Oct. 31, 1970. B1.
- ³⁵Johnson, P.31.text
- ³⁶All names and identifying information have been removed.
- ³⁷Brown, Officer J.S. Investigation Report 858-748. October 29, 1970. Fairfax County Police Department.
- ³⁸The name was blacked out of the report.
- ³⁹Johnson, William L. Investigation Report 858-748. March 14, 1971. Fairfax County Police Department.
- ⁴⁰While the written report makes no specific reference to the assault on Robert Bennett and his fiancé, William L. Johnson confirmed that he investigated that incident as well. He recalled that there was physical damage to the car and that the couple seemed genuinely frightened by the event. Telephone interview with William L. Johnson, December 5, 2001.
- ⁴¹Johnson, William L. Investigation Report 858-748. March 14, 1971. Fairfax County Police Department.
- ⁴²Man in Bunny Suit Sought in Fairfax. **Washington Post**. Oct 22, 1970, B2.
- ⁴³The "Rabbit" Reappears. **Washington Post**. Oct. 31, 1970. B1.
- ⁴⁴Johnson, William L. Investigation Report 858-748. March 14, 1971. Fairfax County Police Department
- ⁴⁵Fairfax Schools Bulletin, Sept./Oct. 1971. Vol. 8, No.1. P.2. NOTE: FCPS Secondary Schools accommodate grades 7 through 12. Robinson's enrollment would top 5000 students within 10 years.
- ⁴⁶Telephone interview with William L. Johnson, December 5, 2001.

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank the following individuals for their assistance with this project:

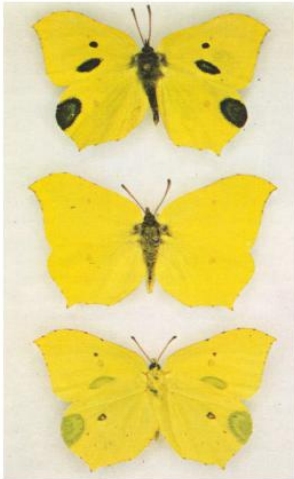
Ruth M. Alvarez, Curator of Literary Manuscripts, University of Maryland Libraries
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Barbara Welch, Volunteer, Fairfax County Public Library

Additional thanks belongs to everyone who shared their personal recollections with the author.

Shortly before his death in 1702, butterfly collector William Charlton (1642-1702) sent a specimen to esteemed London entomologist James Petiver. Petiver thought it was quite remarkable. He wrote, "It exactly resembles our English Brimstone Butterfly (*R. Rhamni*), were it not for those black spots and apparent blue moons on the lower wings. This is the only one I have seen."

Carl Linnaeus had a chance to examine the rare butterfly in 1763 and declared it to be a new species that he named *Papilio ecclipsis*. He included it in the 12th edition (1767) of his *Systema Naturae*.

But thirty years later, in 1793, the Danish entomologist John Christian Fabricius examined it more closely and realized it was a fake. The black spots had been painted on the wings. The rare butterfly, the only one of its kind ever seen, was nothing more than a common Brimstone (*Gonepteryx rhamni*).



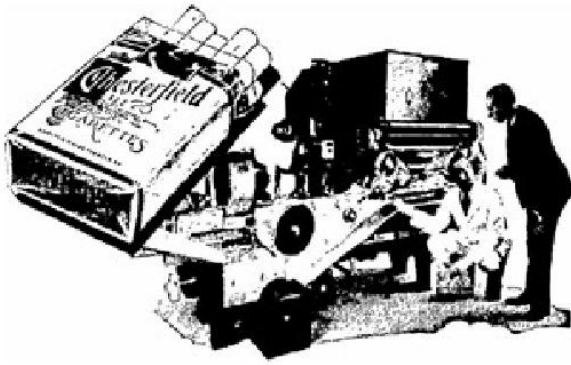
The top and bottom specimens are fakes; the middle one is real.

Dr. E.W. Gray was keeper of National Curiosities at the British Museum where the "Charlton Brimstone" specimen was stored. When he heard of the deception, he is said to have become so enraged that he "indignantly stamped the specimen to pieces."

The lepidopterist William Jones carefully created two replica specimens that are now preserved as "The Charlton Brimstones".

It is unclear whether this is an example of scientific fraud (i.e. Was Charlton hoping he would be credited with the discovery of a new species?), or if it was intended as a mere practical joke.

- Salmon, M., Marren, P., Harley, B. (2001). *The Aurelian Legacy: British Butterflies and their Collectors*. University of California Press: 66-67.



A 1935 ad for Chesterfield cigarettes, captioned: "Machines like this -- new and modern in every respect -- make Chesterfields."

In the Fall of 1934 a rumor swept through America alleging that a leper had been found working in the Chesterfield cigarette factory in Richmond. Sales of Chesterfield cigarettes plummeted as smokers, fearful of catching the dreaded disease,

switched to other brands.

The Liggett and Meyers Tobacco Company, maker of Chesterfields, repeatedly denied the rumor, but to no avail. The company even arranged for the mayor of Richmond to issue a statement assuring the public that the Chesterfield factory had been investigated and no leper found working there. Still sales continued to decline.

The company suspected that the rumor was started by one of its competitors. However, it could never prove this. It offered a \$25,000 reward to anyone who could help it locate the source of the rumor, but the source was not found.

A parallel rumor suggested that the rumor had been started by religious groups opposed to smoking.

Chesterfield ran advertisements that emphasized the clean, modern machines used to manufacture their cigarettes. Nevertheless, it took a full decade for the company to finally shake the rumor and for sales to fully recover.

History of the Rumor

The Chesterfield rumor was not the first time public fears had linked cigarettes with leprosy. The fear of lepers working in cigarette factories was an old one, dating well back into the nineteenth century. For instance, on June 12, 1882 the Pennsylvania *Chester Times* presented its readers with this warning:

A physician who has studied the disease says that it is dangerous to assume that it can only be contracted by actual contact. The very atmosphere in which a leper moves is contaminated. It can be caught by using a chair or room which has been occupied by one afflicted with the disease, or by using a drinking vessel or anything that has been touched by a leper. The street cars are a prolific source of the contagion. Lepers are employed in the cheap cigar and cigarette shops, and scores of instances of the disease are known to have arisen from smoking the articles made by their plague-stricken fingers.

During the 1940s, the leper rumor also became associated with Spud, the first menthol brand of cigarettes. Some sources claim that because of the rumor Spud went out of business within six months, but this is not true. Spud was actually acquired by Philip Morris.

During the Vietnam War a version of the rumor popped up among GIs. It was said that the marijuana cigarettes readily accessible in Saigon, and smoked by many soldiers, were rolled by the inmates of a leper colony. Supposedly the lepers performed the work in an assembly line process according to their handicaps. The sickest ones had the job of licking the wrappers to seal the joint. Some skeptical soldiers voiced suspicions that pentagon generals had started the rumor as part of an anti-drug campaign.

- Conte, I. (December 29, 1970). "GIs in Vietnam solve boredom by smoking marijuana." *Annapolis Evening Capital*.
- Jacobson, D.J. (1948). *The Affairs of Dame Rumor*. New York. Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

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via Feedburner

The last paragraph about US Soliders of the Vietnam War being told about lepers working at making joints reminded me of another legend that was apparently propagated amongst Allied soldiers in Korea and Vietnam. I don't think I recall seeing it on here but I do remember reading a source online where an old Psych-ops officer remembered hearing various rumours on a theme that's a little similar:

Basically, it was alleged in both wars that servicemen who had contracted Syphilis or other sexually transitted illnesses, and who were severely ill with them so that they couldn't be returned to their duties, were being secretly evacuated to an offshore island base somewhere, where they would be held until they died, while their next of kin would simply be informed that they were missing or killed in action. Naturally no evidence ever surfaced that such a thing was actually happening, but many Allied soldiers were adamant that the rumour was true, and always had a 'friend of a friend' who was a medic or a chopper crewman or something, who had been involved in moving patients to the island. At some point when I find the place I heard the story of the rumour again I'll post a link on here. Naturally, there was never any evidence of bases or hospitals like that actually existing, or men with such illnesses actually treated that way.

The author I had read the story from reported that he was sure an officer in some unit or another, possibly another Psychological Warfare outfit, had been propagating the rumour in an attempt to stop Allied soliders frequenting prostitutes in the towns and cities they encountered, or pursuing relationships with local women, so they were spreading horrific tales of men catching sexually transmitted illnesses from local women and dying slowly, exiled to secret bases. The fact that veterans of Korea and Vietnam turned up who had heard the rumour made that author feel that the rumour must have started out in Korea, and been resurrected later by officers or servicemen who had been in that war and later thought it might be useful in Vietnam, to frighten servicemen into keeping it in their fatigues in case they ended up secretly wasting away on an island somewhere.

The three little pigs have built houses made of straw, sticks, and bricks. Frozen's Elsa created her Ice Palace in minutes. Hansel and Gretel's cannibalistic witch lives in a house made of gingerbread and cakes. These places are unfortunately fictional (no real pig-built brick houses, sorry), but there's one place that you can visit in real-life – The Corn Palace. The place sounds unreal, but seeing is believing so head now to Mitchell, South Dakota to see this magnificent structure.



Photo Source: Chad Coppess

Who thought of making a corn palace in the first place? The answer is uncertain but the locals of Mitchell, South Dakota created this unique palace to prove how their city and state had a healthy agricultural climate. The world's first and only corn palace was built before the 20th century, in 1892, the time when Mitchell was still a small and young city of 3,000 inhabitants.

Another corn palace was built in 1905, followed by another one in 1919 which was permanent and more useful than the first two. The building was completed in 1921 right at the time for the Corn Palace Festivities. Today, the Corn Palace doesn't only serve as an amazing sight for tourists, but it is now a multipurpose palace used in exhibits, dances, banquets, stage shows, basketball tournaments, and more.



Photo Source: Chuck and Donna

Naturally-colored corn, other grains, and grass are used to make and decorate the palace. 13 different colors or shades of corn are used: red, brown, black, blue, white, orange, calico, yellow, and green. How the cobs of corn get these colors can make you wonder but for sure they're all natural. Each type are planted in different fields to keep the colors natural and avoid cross-breeding.

The palace is usually decorated starting between April and May. The corn murals are stripped in August and the new ones are completed by October, so expect to see new murals every year that'll entice you to visit again and again. Entrance to the Corn Palace is totally free.



To complete your "corn-y" visit, you can buy caramel corn cobs, popcorn balls, and t-shirts in their

Corn-cessions Gift Shop. It's going to be a corn-loaded trip!

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The Creepy Legend of the *Ourang Medan*

In February 1948, distress calls were picked up by numerous ships near Indonesia from the Dutch freighter *SS Ourang Medan*, which was passing through the Straits of Malacca. The chilling message was, "All officers including captain are dead lying in chartroom and bridge. Possibly whole crew dead." This message was followed by indecipherable Morse code then one final grisly message... "I die."

When the first rescue vessel, the American merchant ship *Silver Star* arrived on the scene a few hours later, they tried to hail the *Ourang Medan* but there was no response to their hand and whistle signals. A boarding party was sent to the ship and what they found was a frightening sight that has made the *Ourang Medan* one of the strangest and scariest ghost ship stories of all time. All the crew and officers of the *Ourang Medan* were dead, their eyes open, faces looking towards the sun, arms outstretched and a look of terror on their faces. Even the ship's dog was dead, found snarling at some unseen enemy. When nearing the bodies in the boiler room, the rescue crew felt a chill though the temperature was near 110°F.

The decision was made to tow the ship back to port but before they could get underway, smoke began rolling up from the hull. The rescue crew left the ship and barely had time to cut the tow lines before the *Ourang Medan* exploded and sank.

Posted on Monday, 10 August, 2009 | 4 comments

Columnist: Patrick Bernauw

Don't mention the name of "that play"! The Unmentionable is considered to bring bad luck to its cast... Apparently, the story that Macbeth was cursed sprang up on its opening night in 1606. The actor who was playing Lady Macbeth became mysteriously ill and Shakespeare himself had to step into his shoes. Macbeth was commissioned by king James I, who attended the opening night. It was a right royal disaster. Fifty years had to pass before Macbeth was performed.

Macbeth tells of the dangers of the lust for power and the betrayal of friends. Amidst thunder and lightning, three witches greet the Scottish general Macbeth and his friend Banquo with prophecies. They proclaim that he shall be "King hereafter" and that Banquo shall father a new line of kings. Immediately, Macbeth begins to harbour ambitions of becoming the king of Scotland. He writes to his wife about the prophecy and when King Duncan decides to stay at Macbeths' castle at Inverness, Lady Macbeth makes a plan to murder him. Macbeth kills his king, but it leaves him totally shaken. Lady Macbeth has to take charge now. In order to secure their throne, they will have to kill and murder again and again and again...

Since 1606, there have been a string of deaths and misfortunes associated with "Macbeth". In 1667, the dark and gruesome tragedy was rewritten as a frivolous light-hearted musical, complete with dancing and a flying ballet. This version, with three singing witches, was revived in 1703 during a puritan backlash against the theatre. During its run the worst storm in England's history occured: a half thousand seamen died, Bristol was destroyed and London severely damaged. The hurricane expressed God's wrath, the puritans said.

The original text was restored by Kemble at Drury Lane in 1794. At one performance, an actor playing the role of Macbeth sustained a near-fatal stab wound. Passionate fights were enacted with real weapons, and it is known that an actor playing the role of Macduff came away without thumbs, hacked off by the fiery Macbeth. In 1849, there was a riot in which more than 30 people died at the Astor Place Opera House, where "The Unmentionable" was playing.

In the 1937 production at the Old Vic in London, the director got nearly killed in a car crash. Vera Lindsay, playing Lady Macbeth, was also badly bruised. The star of the production, the famous actor Laurence Olivier, lost his voice and almost died when a weight from the stage lights came tumbling down. After this incident, the the founder of the theatre, Lilian Bayliss, had a heart attack and died on the opening night. Later a member of the audience was hit by a fragment of Olivier's sword, and died also of a heart attack.

A wartime production with John Gielgud as Macbeth may hold the record. The Third Witch fell

ill and died of a heart attack during the final rehearsal and the actor playing King Duncan died of angina. A witch was dancing round the cauldron, but could not maintain the tempo of the music. She collapsed and died on stage. And the set designer committed suicide.

In 1947, the promising young actor Harold Norman played Macbeth. In the final scene, Norman fell - but instead of dying on stage as rehearsed, he crawled into the wings. 'I've been stabbed,' he whispered to the stage director. He was taken to a hospital and died a month later. Later it emerged that, in the dressing-room he shared with another actor, Norman had begun quoting from "The Unmentionable", refusing to stop even when warned.

Charlton Heston has played Macbeth several times. In 1953 he took the role in an open-air production at Fort St Catherine, Bermuda. During rehearsals he had a motorbike crash, during the first performance he had to ride a horse bareback in the first scene. Heston suddenly rushed off stage, pointing at his thighs, writhing in pain and yelling: "Get them off me!" - Whoever had laundered the thighs had dipped them in kerosene and the sweat of the horses and the heat caused serious burns on Heston's legs and groin. Later, Macbeth's castle came down burning as planned, but the wind blew flames and smoke into the audience, causing a stampede. Fortunately, nobody died in or during this production.

In 1954, the Old Vic went on the road again with "that Scottish play". The company manager broke both legs in a car accident, an electrician sustained severe burns, there was an attempted suicide and two of the actresses had abortions. A year later, Olivier played Macbeth again, with Vivien Leigh as his Lady. A film version was prepared, but the producers got cold feet, deciding that stars like Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh could not guarantee a good box-office... after Vivien Leigh had been in *Gone With the Wind* and Olivier's film versions of *Henry V*, *Hamlet* and *Richard III* all had been hits.

In 1961, during the Shakespeare Festival at Stratford, Connecticut, an actor on a bike was knocked over by a car. He was joined in hospital by one of the witches, who fell from a stage lift. In the last month of the season, Franklin Clover was playing Macbeth in the White House before JFK. He got injured and developed a cyst under his arm, was operated but continued playing. A young colleague was found dying of stab wounds, the murderer was never found. The company manager got himself murdered too, in his Boston apartment.

In 1970, an actor of the Liverpool Repertory Theatre playing Macbeth was hit in the eye by a sword, his Lady caught flu, which spread, so five understudies were needed... Etcetera, etcetera...

"If you take any play as popular as Macbeth, you'll find a catalogue of disasters attached to its history," Michael Bogdanov of the English Shakespeare Company stated. He had been on the road six months with a production of Macbeth without any calamities. Sceptics have pointed out that a play involving so many battles, duels and murders, taking place mostly at night (meaning dim lighting), is bound to cause accidents. Playing "that Play" is emotionally and physically exhausting, and you have to get up and down steps and rostrums, and even with blunted swords, cuts and bruises are only to be expected...

The believers, on the other hand, have proved that Shakespeare went too far in his desire for

authenticity, by using genuine black magic recipes. The foul ingredients of the witches' brew in Act I, Scene 3 - scale of dragon, tooth of wolf,... - were not solely the product of Shakespeare's imagination. In his book *Supernatural on Stage*, actor-director Richard Huggett claims that there is overwhelming evidence that the three witches in *Macbeth* do use genuine black magic incantations, whereby Shakespeare invoked a fatal and irrevocable curse on the play.

King James himself had previously published a book on witches and how to detect them. In an effort to please the King, for the opening scene of Act IV, Shakespeare reproduced a sacred black-magic ritual. A group of witches danced around a black cauldron, throwing ingredients into it and shouting out strange phrases. Some say that it is also possible the practitioners of this sort of rituals were not very amused by Shakespeare's public exposure of their witchcraft, and so they decided to cast their own spell on the play...

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The Dajjal: Islam's Antichrist

The third primary character that dominates Islamic eschatology is a man whose full title is *Al-Maseeh* (The Messiah) *Ad-Dajjal*, (The Liar/Deceiver). Usually just referred to as the Dajjal, he is a bizarre character whose description and story seem far more fantastic than either the Mahdi or the Muslim Jesus. There are numerous hadith that contain descriptions of the Dajjal. Here we will just touch on the most common of these traditions to give an overview of just who this mysterious and strange person is.

The Great Deceiver

The Dajjal is described as being a deceiver who will have miraculous powers and who will temporarily hold power over the whole earth:

The Prophet was warning us that in the last days there would be someone who would deceive all of humanity. The Dajjal will possess power over this world. Thus, Muslims must be careful not to have the love of the world in their hearts so they won't leave their religion and follow him. He will be able to heal the sick by wiping his hand on them, like Jesus did, but with this deceit the Dajjal will lead people down the path to hell. Thus the Dajjal is the false Messiah, or Anti-Christ (*Massih ad-Dajjal*). He will pretend to be the Messiah, and deceive people by showing them amazing powers. 1

He is One Eyed

Possibly the most frequently quoted reference to the Dajjal is that he is blind in one eye. The Hadith however, are contradictory regarding which eye is blind:

Allah's Messenger made a mention of Dajjal in the presence of the people and said: Allah is not one-eyed and behold that Dajjal is *blind of the right eye* and his eye would be like a floating grape. 2

Allah's Messenger said: Dajjal is *blind of left eye* with thick hair and there would be a garden and fire with him and his fire would be a garden and his garden would be fire. 3

Infidel

The Dajjal is sometimes said to have the word "Infidel" (*Kaafir*) written in-between his eyes, possibly on his forehead. But this word will only be perceptible to true Muslims, and no one else:

Allah's Messenger said: Dajjal is blind of one eye and there is written between his eyes the word "kaafir" (unbeliever/infidel). He then spelled the word as k. f. r., which every Muslim would be able to read. 4

Very Important is that; this word "Kafir" will be readable only by the believer, literate or

illiterate. Non-believer: let him be educated from "Oxford" or "Harvard" will not be able to read it. 5

A False Miracle Worker

Sheikh Kabbani describes some of the Dajjal's miraculous powers:

The Dajjal will have powers of the devil. He will terrorize the Muslims into following him, converting them into unbelief. He will conceal the truth and bring forth falsehood. The prophet said that the Dajjal will have the power to show the image of one's dead ancestors on his hand, like a television screen. The relative will say, "Oh my son! This man is correct. I am in Paradise because I was good and I believed in him." In reality that relative is in hell. If the relative says, "Believe in this man, I am in hell because I didn't believe," one must say to the Dajjal, "No, he is in Paradise. This is false." 6

The Prophet said: the Dajjal will say to a Bedouin Arab, "what will you think if I bring your father and mother back to life for you? Will you bear witness that I am your lord? The Bedouin will say, "Yes." So two devils will assume the appearance of his father and mother, and say, "O my son, follow him for he is your lord..." 7

The Dajjal Will Claim To Be Jesus Christ And Will Claim To Be Divine

The above tradition shows that the Dajjal's deceptive signs will be for the purpose of leading people into believing that the Dajjal is actually their "lord". Muslim scholars universally have concluded that the Dajjal will claim to be divine. According to the very well known Muslim scholar, Abu Ameenah Bilal Phillips, the Dajjal, "will claim to be God". 8

While there are no specific traditions that state such directly, as a result of the fact that the Dajjal is, according to Islamic tradition, the false Jewish Messiah who claims to be God, most Muslims have deduced that the Dajjal will thus claim to be Jesus Christ by name.

The Dajjal And His Magic Mule

Muslim Scholar Muhammad Ali ibn Zubair Ali says of the Dajjal, "He will travel at great speeds and his means of conveyance will be a giant mule... He will travel the entire world." 9 As strange as this is, it also bears a faint resemblance to Jesus the Messiah who also rode a donkey as he entered Jerusalem during the final week of his ministry.

Cities Of Refuge

It is said that there are three cities that the Dajjal may not enter; Mecca, Medina and Damascus. Muslims are encouraged to seek refuge from the Dajjal in one of these three cities:

The Prophet said, "Ad-Dajjal will come to Medina and find the angels guarding it. So Allah willing, neither Ad-Dajjal, nor plague will be able to come near it." 10

The coming of the Anti-Christ (Dajjal) must occur in the Last Days. This dreadful event is

approaching, and in that time only three cities will be safe: Makka, Madina, and Sham (Damascus). If anyone wants safety in that time he will have to run to one of these three cities. 11

Apart from these three cities, it is said that the Dajjal will enter every single city, town and village in the world to test and possibly deceive every human alive. 12

A Surah Of Protection

Muslims believe that if they memorize a particular portion of the Quran that they will be protected from the Dajjal. It is somewhat like a verbal amulet that protects one from the powers of evil:

If the Dajjal comes upon someone who has memorized the first ten verses of *Surat al Kahf* (Chapter of the Cave) he cannot harm him. And whoever memorizes the last verses of *Surat al-Kahf* will have light on the day of Judgement. 13

He will be Jewish And Will Be Followed by Jews and Women

Based on various Islamic traditions, Muslims believe that the Dajjal will be Jewish. The title of a book by Muslim author Matloob Ahmed Qasmi, *Emergence of the Dajjal, the Jewish King* couldn't make this point more clearly. Imam Sheikh Ibrahim Madhi of the Palestinian Authority articulated the Islamic perspective regarding the expectation of the Jewish people quite well in one of his sermons:

The Jews await the false Jewish messiah, while we await, with Allah's help... the Mahdi and Jesus, peace be upon him. Jesus's pure hands will murder the false Jewish messiah. Where? In the city of Lod, in Palestine. Palestine will be, as it was in the past, a graveyard for the invaders 14

Samuel Shahid, a Christian Arab scholar in his scholarly study of Islamic eschatology says of the Dajjal that he will be, "the embodiment of the Jewish hope and longing. The bulk of his army is recruited from the Jews."15

As mentioned in the last chapter, the followers of the Dajjal will primarily consist of Jews and women. It is mentioned that women are very ignorant and as such are easily misled. Veliankode states, "Meanwhile, women will also fall to the deviant line of the Antichrist because of their unawareness and ignorance of Islam." 16

Slain By The Muslim Jesus

As mentioned in the last chapter, it will be the Muslim Jesus who will kill the Dajjal and his followers:

Allah's Messenger said: ...the time of prayer shall come and then Jesus son of Mary would descend and would lead them in prayer. When the enemy of Allah (Dajjal) would see him... Allah would kill them by his (Jesus') hand and he would show them their blood on his lance (the lance of Jesus Christ). 17

Notes:

1. Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, *The Approach of Armageddon? An Islamic Perspective* (Canada, Supreme Muslim Council of America, 2003), p. 223
2. Sahih Muslim Book 041, Number 7005, reported by Ibn Umar
3. Sahih Muslim Book 041, Number 7010, reported by Hudhalifa
4. Sahih Muslim Book 041, Number 7009, reported by Anas b. Malik
5. Kamran R'ad, *Freemasons and Dajjal*, (London, Islamic Academy, 2003), p. 173
6. Kabbani 223-4
7. Sunan Ibn Majah #4067, related by Abu Umamam Al-Bahili, quoted in Kabbani, p. 225
8. Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips, Ph.D. *Ad-Dajjal, The Antichrist*, (Alexandria, Soundknowledge Audio Publishers, 2001)
9. Mohammad Ali Ibn Zubair Ali, *Signs Of Qiyama*, (Abdul Naeem, New Delhi, 2004), p.17
10. Sahih Bukhari, Volume 9, Book 88, Number 248, Narrated by Anas bin Malik:
11. Kabbani, p. 226
12. .Philips
13. Suyuti, Durr al-Manthur, as quoted in Kabbani, p.227
14. Excerpts from a Friday sermon delivered by Palestinian Authority Imam Sheikh Ibrahim Madhi at the Sheikh 'Ijlin Mosque in Gaza City, broadcast live on April 12, 2002 by Palestinian Authority television <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP37002>
15. Samuel Shahid, *The Last Trumpet: A Comparative Study of Christian-Islamic Eschatology* (US, Xulon, 2005), p. 254
16. Sidheeque M.A. Veinakode, p. 312
17. Sahih Muslim, Book 041, Number 6924, reported by Abu Huraira

Reader Favorites: The Day They Hanged an Elephant in East Tennessee

by Joan Vannorsdall Schroeder May 1, 1997 12:00 AM

<http://blueridgecountry.com/archive/favorites/mary-the-elephant/>



It was 1916, and things were changing fast. World War I raged in Europe. Dadaism, ripe with comic derision and irrationality, took hold in artistic circles. Freeform jazz took hold of the American music scene. Margaret Sanger opened the first birth-control clinic. It was a good year for scapegoats. It was a good year to hang an elephant.

The Place

Erwin, Tennessee seems to be a polite and patriotic town, where campaign signs ask voters to "Please Elect...", then thank them in advance. It's a place where many of the Main Street businesses mark the Fourth of July by closing down for four days, and nobody seems to mind the inconvenience.

In 1916, Erwin was a railroad boom town, home to the Cincinnati, Clinchfield, and Ohio Railroad's repair facilities, "sprouting like a boy growing too fast for his own britches," according to longtime resident Hank S. Johnson. The population of Erwin (which was supposed to be called Ervin, in honor of the man who donated 15 acres of land for the town, but was misspelled by a postal worker) nearly

tripled in the first 16 years of the century. Makeshift boardwalks stretched above the ankle-deep yellow mud in the streets.

The Clinchfield line used to carry coal out of the Tennessee mountains; Clinchfield and Blue Ridge Pottery were the major employers in Erwin. For decades, the railroad yards were the busiest place in town.

Now, the yards are quiet: pigeons roost in the old passenger station, and most of the tracks are dull from disuse.

This is where Murderous Mary, a five-ton cow elephant with the Sparks Brothers Circus, was hung by the neck from Derrick Car 1400 on September 13, 1916. The story of why and how Mary died is, of course, obscured by time and countless retelling: an example of the best and worst of oral history. It is tragic, absurd, excessive: quintessential turn-of-the-century America.

The Players

Charlie Sparks, the owner of Sparks World Famous Shows, was a frustrated man. His circus was two-bit, compared to his southern rival, John Robinson's Four Ring Circus and Menagerie. A circus's net worth was measured in rolling stock and elephants: Sparks' dog-and-pony show traveled in a mere 10 railroad cars, compared to Robinson's 42; Sparks could boast of only five elephants compared to Robinson's dozen. Never mind Barnum and Bailey -- 84 railroad cars was beyond Charlie Sparks' reach.

So Charlie did the best he could, traveling around the South, putting up advance posters and enticing folks with a noon circus parade prior to the day's two performances. Sparks posters claimed a certain degree of moral superiority:

"Twenty-five years of honest dealing with the public!"

"Moral, entertaining, and instructive!"

"The show that never broke a promise!"

What else did Sparks offer? Educated sea lions. Greasepainted and powdered dogs and humans, posing like Greek statues. Clowns. The Man Who Walks Upon His Head. And elephants.

Mary was billed as "the largest living land animal on earth"; her owner claimed she was three inches bigger than Jumbo, P.T. Barnum's famous pachyderm. At 30 years old, Mary was five tons of pure talent: she could "play 25 tunes on the musical horns without missing a note"; the pitcher on the circus baseball-game routine, her .400 batting average "astonished millions in New York."

Rumor and exaggeration swarmed about Mary like flies. She was worth a small fortune: \$20,000, Charlie Sparks claimed. She was dangerous, having killed two men, or was it eight, or 18?

She was Charlie Sparks' favorite, his cash cow, his claim to circus fame. She was the leader of his small band of elephants, an exotic crowd-pleaser, an unpredictable giant.

On Monday, September 11, 1916, Sparks World Famous Shows played St. Paul, Va., a tiny mining town in the Clinch River Valley.

Which is where drifter Red Eldridge made a fatal decision. Slight and flame-haired, Red had nothing to lose by signing up with Sparks World Famous Shows: he'd dropped into St. Paul from a Norfolk and Western boxcar and decided to stay for a while. Taking a job as janitor at the Riverside Hotel, Eldridge found himself pushing a broom and, then, dreaming of moving on.

Eldridge was hired as an elephant handler and marched in the circus parade that afternoon. It's easy to imagine that what he lacked in skill and knowledge, he made up for with go-for-broke bravado. A small man carrying a big stick can be a dangerous thing.

The Proceedings

No one denies that Mary killed Eldridge in Kingsport, Tenn. on September 12, 1916. The details of why and how it happened, gathered from oral-history tapes from the Archives of Appalachia at East Tennessee State University, vary so wildly that they should be read with skepticism, and no small dose of chagrin.

Version I. After the Kingsport performance, Red Eldridge was assigned to ride Mary to a pond, where she could drink and splash with the other elephants. According to W.H. Coleman, who at the tender age of 19 witnessed the "murder":

There was a big ditch at that time, run up through Center Street, ...And they'd sent these boys to ride the elephants... There was, oh, I don't know now, seven or eight elephants... and they went down to water them and on the way back each boy had a little stick-like, that was a spear or a hook in the end of it... And this big old elephant reach over to get her a watermelon rind, about half a watermelon somebody eat and just laid it down there; 'n he did, the boy give him a jerk. He pulled him away from 'em, and he just blowed real big, and when he did, he took him right around the waist... and threwed him against the side of the drink stand and he just knocked the whole side out of it. I guess it killed him, but when he hit the ground the elephant just walked over and set his foot on his head... and blood and brains and stuff just squirted all over the street.



Version II. As reported in the September 13, 1916 issue of the Johnson City Staff, Mary "collided its trunk vice-like [sic] about [Eldridge's] body, lifted him 10 feet in the air, then dashed him with fury to the ground... and with the full force of her biestly [sic] fury is said to have sunk her giant tusks entirely through his body. The animal then trampled the dying form of Eldridge as if seeking a murderous triumph, then with a sudden... swing of her massive foot hurled his body into the crowd."

Version III. Maybe Mary was simply bored, as a staff writer for the Johnson City Press-Chronicle suggested in 1936. "The elephant's keeper, while in the act of feeding her, walked unsuspectingly between her and the tent wall. For no reason that could be ascertained, Mary became angry and, with a vicious swish of her trunk, landed a fatal blow on his head."

Version IV. Or did Mary kill Red Eldridge because she was in pain? Erwin legend has it that Mary had two abscessed teeth, which caused her such agony that she went berserk when Eldridge tapped her with his elephant stick. The infections were, of course, discovered only after Mary was killed.

Regardless of the details, the end was the same -- a man dead. Justice to be served. And besides, Charlie Sparks was no fool: no town in Tennessee would invite his circus to perform with a certifiably rogue elephant. Johnson City, where performances were scheduled for September 26, had already passed a privilege-tax ordinance restricting carnivals' operations within city limits, in order to protect its citizens from wholesale fleecing; it was common knowledge that Johnson City officials were looking for an excuse to ban all traveling shows. As valuable as Mary was, she had to go.

The problem was, how?

Guns, of course, were the first course of action. Just after Eldridge's death, blacksmith Hench Cox fired his 32-20 five times at Mary; the story goes that the bullets hardly phased her. "Kill the elephant. Let's kill him," the crowd began chanting. Later, Sheriff Gallahan "knocked chips out of her hide a little" with his .45, according to witness Bud Jones. But the circus manager stated, "There ain't gun enough

in this country that he could be killed"; another approach would have to be attempted.

Someone suggested electrocution: "They tried to electrocute her in Kingsport -- they put 44,000 volts to her and she just danced a little bit," railroader Mont Lilly claimed. Others report that electrocution was never an option, because there wasn't enough power running in the railroad yards to affect Mary. (Since most American railroads continued to use steam locomotives until the 1930s, it's curious that railroad electrocution was even a possibility.)

Other reports suggest a third execution method: hooking Mary to two opposing engines and dismembering her, or crushing her between two facing engines. Both were dismissed as too cruel.

And so it was decided, instead, that Murderous Mary would be hung by the neck from a derrick car the next day.

The Execution

Mary didn't perform for the matinee performance the day she died. She was chained outside the circus tent, and folks say she spent the entire performance time swaying nervously. The crowd's dissatisfaction with her absence was mollified by the announcement that Mary would be hung in the Clinchfield Railyards later in the afternoon -- with no additional charge for admission.

More than 2,500 people gathered to watch Mary swing near the turn-table and powerhouse on that drizzly afternoon; perhaps the number of eyewitnesses, as well as the unforgettable, sad spectacle of the event, explains the consensus on this part of the story.

One of those witnesses, Myrtle Taylor, remembered that every child in Erwin was at the Clinchfield Yards. "And they took the other elephants and Mary down Love Street from the performance to the railyards, trunk to tail. We kids hung back because we were scared to death, but still we wanted to see it."

Wade Ambrose, who was 20 at the time Mary was hung, recalls that the roustabouts chained Mary's leg to the rail, then drove her companions back around the roundhouse.

"They had a time getting the chain around her neck. Then they hooked the boom to the neck chain, and when they began to lift her up, I heard the bones and ligaments cracking in her foot. They finally discovered that she'd not been released from the rail, so they did that."

It doesn't seem surprising that the chain from which Mary hung snapped shortly after she was raised off the ground. It was, after all, just a 7/8" chain, and Mary weighed 10,000 pounds. She hit the ground and sat upright, immobilized from the pain of a broken hip.

"It made a right smart little racket when the elephant hit the ground," says eyewitness George Ingram, with admirable understatement.

Seeing Mary loose, not knowing that she had broken her hip and couldn't move, the crowd panicked and ran for cover. Then one of the roustabouts "ran up her back like he was climbing a small hill and attached a heavier chain"; the winch was put in motion a second time, and Mary died.

They left her hanging for a half-hour, witnesses say, and then they dumped her in the grave they'd dug with a steam shovel 400 feet up the tracks. (The reports of the grave size vary from a too-small 10 by 12 feet to "big as a barn.")



When Mary's massive and valuable tusks were sawed off is a matter of debate. Some, such as eyewitness M.D. Clark, claim that "they dug down that night and cut her tushes off." Mont Lilly, who helped hang Mary, claims someone made a pair of dice from the tusks.

A careful observer of the one photograph allegedly taken at Mary's hanging will notice that the elephant suspended there has no tusks. So either Mary's tusks were removed before she was hung -- or they were removed after the hanging and Mary was "rehung" for a photo-op. A third possibility -- that the photograph was a hoax -- ought not to be discounted; when it was submitted to Argosy magazine for publication, the photo was rejected as a phony.

Tusks or no tusks, Mary or a superimposed substitute: The photograph revealing the hung elephant is a mirror of the times, in which Old Testament, frontier justice was served (Mary had, after all, killed two or three or 18 men), and people's insatiable hunger for grotesquery was, at least temporarily, satisfied.

Eighty Years Later...

There is an antique shop in Erwin memorializing -- or capitalizing -- on Mary's death. The owners of the Hanging Elephant Antique Shop sell T-shirts emblazoned with Mary's likeness, which also graces the side of their building.

There is also in Erwin a woman named Ruth Piper, who has made it her mission to memorialize Mary, to wash the town clean of elephant blood. Piper believes that Erwin has for too long taken the rap for Mary's death.

"Kingsport, the railroad, and Mr. Sparks are to blame for what happened to Mary -- not Erwin. People feel so guilty about it -- we've got to release it. It is a sad, sad thing that happened, but we have to let it go."

Somewhat paradoxically, Piper wants an elephant statue and fountain built in town, a movie at the visitor center, a memorial wreath laid in the railroad yards. In October 1995, she presented her proposal to the Erwin Bicentennial Committee. Nothing came of it.

There is a final irony clinging to the story of Murderous Mary, one that firmly places Mary's murder in a time and place. In an article published in the March 1971 issue of the Tennessee Folklore Society Bulletin, author Thomas Burton reports that some local residents recall "two Negro keepers" being hung alongside Mary, and that others remember Mary's corpse being burned on a pile of crossties. "This belief," Burton writes, "may stem from a fusion of the hanging with another incident that occurred in Erwin, the burning on a pile of crossties of a Negro who allegedly abducted a white girl."

The murder of an elephant: a spectacle. The murder of "a Negro": another spectacle.

It was 1916 -- a good year for scapegoats in America.



Alan Feduccia's Latest Contribution to the Dino-Bird Controversy:

I have always been interested in the dinosaur-bird controversy, even though I have not worked on any of the relevant areas of paleontology. My passion for the subject comes from many sources, including the following:- 1. An early champion of the dino-bird connection, Thomas Henry Huxley was a personal hero who became famous for his eloquent discourse on the subject, who married an Australian wife, and who probably shared my bipolar diathesis; 2. I once caught a flight to Sydney to see the famous feathered dinosaurs on display at the Australian Museum, which I discovered were not unequivocally feathered at all!; 3. I acquired an intimate knowledge of the sensory physiology of birds with which I share an empathy that has encouraged in me a strong motivation to learn more about their origins; 4. I have painful personal experience with the unsavoury tactics of antagonists in another phylogenetic controversy, the flying primate debate, which shares overlapping polemicists and tricksters with the avian origins debate, both of which debates, *inter alia*, concern the evolution of vertebrate flight.

There are other reasons that I could recount too, but the point is to introduce Alan Feduccia's new book on the topic, *"Riddle of the Feathered Dragons"*, which I was impatient to read. Feduccia's first book on this subject, *"Origin and Evolution of Birds"* was reviewed simultaneously in both of the top scientific journals, *Nature* and *Science*, in 1981 when it stretched credulity, on reading these two contrasting reviews, that they concerned the same book! The *Nature* review by Mark Norell and Luis Chiappe was a savage attack from two dyed-in-the wool, hot-headed antagonists, while the *Science* review by Kenneth Campbell was a balanced account whose major criticism concerned the quality of the illustrations. This criticism applies also to the new book, whose half-tones are a bit fuzzy on matte paper, but it has to be pointed out that Feduccia gives details of the provenance of each illustration so that an interested reader can source the original, a politeness that is rare in books these days. As Campbell pointed out in his review of the previous book, it is Feduccia's prose that makes this book worthwhile. Feduccia has an incisive style that makes it clear where he stands. He is also polite to those on the other side of the controversy, albeit giving them plenty of rope to hang themselves where appropriate. This politeness contrasts markedly with the ill-considered polemics of his many antagonists which can readily be sampled on the internet.

Feduccia is a member of the "loyal opposition", who along with Larry Martin, have not been swayed by the mountain of studies that put forward the thesis that birds are theropod dinosaurs. The book sets out a number of points that form the basis of the "loyal opposition" to the theropod dinosaur-bird link. These points have not been adequately tested, if at all, by the opposition. They are summarised below:-

1. Life forms share basically the same DNA molecule, so we are all linked toward the base of the tree of life. For this reason it is obvious that birds and dinosaurs must have had a common ancestor at some earlier point, but was it a theropod dinosaur? And so

late in the Mesozoic? With that in mind, Feduccia carefully sets out much of what is known about the fossil ancestors of dinosaurs and birds so that it is possible to avoid the facile trap of placing excessive weight on the linkage that any two lineages must have had at some time in the past.

2. Another major point concerns one's definition of a bird, a key issue in the first book. Feduccia has always maintained that birds are defined by their feathers, those unmistakeable and beautiful specialisations of the integument, with unique structures like rachis and barb, that bear no obvious relation to the collagenous filaments on the *inside* of the integument in a variety of Mesozoic vertebrates that have also been called "feathers". This was the unconvincing "fuzz" that I saw on my trip to see "feathered dinosaurs" at the Australian Museum's display of Liaoning fossils. Fuzz of this kind has also been described in completely unrelated pterosaurs and ornithiscian dinosaurs. Martin and Feduccia both have an uncomplicated viewpoint that fossils with feathers are birds (perhaps flightless ones, as dealt with below).

3. Another point concerns the polarity of evolution, which Feduccia discusses in the context of flightlessness in birds, for which there are no known examples of reversals, despite the very common occurrence of flightlessness in recent birds, and most likely, in Mesozoic birds too.

Polarity is the bugbear of many phylogenetic analyses and there are published phylogenies, both molecular and morphological, which are upside down because polarity was determined for the data matrix by reference to an inappropriate outgroup. [A moment's consideration will show that forcing an outgroup to the base of the tree, as these analyses usually do, will "pull" taxa with more derived characters there too, so inverting the order of steps in the tree, if the chosen "outgroup" is actually part of the ingroup, with many derived characters]. As Feduccia points out, polarity must ultimately be determined from the relative age of the various fossils of supposed progenitors, so the current almost-religious reliance on cladistic analyses of data matrices has a circularity that needs to be broken by the appropriate detailed considerations of relative timing that are available from natural history, such as Feduccia's apt generalisation that avian flightlessness is common now, was probably equally common in the Mesozoic, and has never reversed as far as we know.

4. If Feduccia is right, that Mesozoic flightless birds are masquerading as theropods, perhaps quantitative studies could be brought to bear on this. To take just one example, a distinguishing feature of birds and theropods is the marked forelimb foreshortening of the latter, so it might be possible to differentiate Mesozoic flightless birds quantitatively on the basis of a consideration of progressive foreshortening of their forelimbs at the same time as one tries to determine the polarity of such changes. There is no reason to think that all birds failed to evolve flightlessness in the Mesozoic, when they had much more time to do so, around 100 million years of the Mesozoic compared with 65 million years of the more recent times when there are abundant examples of terrestrial flightless birds. As well as having plenty of time, they were also more diverse, with two great lineages, the Enantiornithes having died out at the end of the Cretaceous. It might be argued that Neornithes exhibited more evolutionary plasticity than their extinct enantiornithine cousins from the Mesozoic, and so more cases of recent flightlessness. Even if one could sustain this argument, Neornithes have an ancient record from both fossil and molecular evidence that raises the question of

why there is, thus far, no evidence that flightlessness has appeared during a period that is more than twice the length of the recent time when flightlessness has evolved many times over, never reversing. Rails lose the power of flight at the drop of a hat, by virtue of small, delaying, adjustments of the embryonic development of the flight apparatus, which is late in rails. This emphasises the ease with which birds can divest themselves of flight and gives added emphasis to Feduccia's hypothesis.

5. A logical point from physics emphasised by Feduccia impinges on the controversy, although many would consider its inclusion as too global to be relevant to the interpretation of fossil birds and dinosaurs. For me it is a crucial point, and one that also rears its head in the flying primate debate. A logical conclusion that follows acceptance of the dino-bird link is that the evolution of flight is ground-up rather than trees down. I have always regarded the ground-up scenario for the evolution of flight as physically implausible. The innumerable examples of the evolution of gliding flight in extant vertebrates all fit the trees-down scenario (excluding the contentious birds, there are around a dozen independent examples; 3 marsupial families, 2 rodent families, an aberrant primate and numerous frogs, snakes, lizards and geckoes). Since the ground-up scenario cannot be separated from the dino-bird hypothesis, Feduccia and I agree that one should look very critically at a hypothesis when the contextual implications contradict physics.

For an outsider, the most difficult aspect of the book is the plethora of new names for Mesozoic taxa with which one has to become a little familiar if one is truly to master Feduccia's thesis. Thankfully, there is a comprehensive index so that one can refresh one's memory about the later mention of an unfamiliar taxon, such as a troodontid or a scansoriopterygid, by finding its illustration or earlier mention. As one tries to master the wealth of new detail that has been provided on Mesozoic birds and dinosaurs that Feduccia is obviously in touch with, one realises that it takes an unusual human brain to get on top of all the details yet be able to entertain a variety of global evolutionary permutations of them. Such human cerebral limitations may partly explain the popularity of the many computer algorithms for phylogenetic reconstruction. Despite the convenience of these algorithms in systematising very large data matrices that few human minds have the motivation and capacity to handle, they have flaws, some of which are detailed by Feduccia. High on his list is convergence, a major source of difficulty in phylogenetic reconstruction. Convergence would be expected to constrain the evolution of two unrelated terrestrial bipeds in the same direction so that they came to share derived skeletal traits that might be misinterpreted as relatedness. The possibility of convergence casts doubt over even the massive skeletal data matrix that appears to support the bird-dinosaur link. Convergence is pervasive in evolution and requires sensitive techniques for its detection, which may take many years after the first false alignment of two taxa, like the New World and Old World vultures or the Doppler-shift compensation strategy for acoustically hunting for insects in clutter independently discovered by New World pteronotid and Old World rhinolophoid microbats. Even DNA molecules themselves can be subject to convergence, as shown early on by Allan Wilson and recently by Bernardi's demonstration of the effects of body temperature. This has led to many cases where false, even preposterous, pairings persisted despite huge amounts of DNA sequence data. The essential feature of convergence is that two taxa appear to be much closer phylogenetically than when the distance between them is calculated indirectly using other

methods such as the distances to nearby taxa. There are now quantitative techniques that can “crack” convergence by measuring evolutionary distance between candidate taxa in two different ways to reveal the discrepancy between them that is diagnostic of convergence. Such techniques do not yet seem to have been applied to the dino-bird controversy, although I have always felt that the cladistic case for the dinosaur-bird link from skeletal characters was flawed because of the likelihood of convergence, which was ignored and certainly not tested for, except in a superficial, circular, way using parsimony.

There is another potential flaw in the use of large data matrices to replace reasoning and the presentation of the raw material. I hate to mention this, having encountered it in the course of the flying primate debate on the possibility that mammalian powered flight has evolved twice. This is currently a minority viewpoint like Feduccia's trees-down hypothesis for bird flight. It is relatively easy to “salt” a large data matrix with manufactured character states that support one's side of the controversy if there is a small risk of a referee knowing, or being able to go back to, the original material. As the late Hendrik van der Loos used to point out, it is easier to detect such malfeasance if one is used to “peeing in the same corner”. In the case that I was involved in, these were not random or typographical errors in the data matrix, but systematic changes that all falsely supported the hypothesis of bat monophyly being pushed by the authors. I have no idea whether this has also happened in the somewhat acrimonious phases of the dino-bird debate, but I note a degree of overlap between the casts of characters in both these debates that involve evolution of flight, as well as noting the scoundrel reputation of American paleontologists that has come down to us from Cope and Marsh..

Alan Feduccia reminds me of Alfred Wegener, whose minority position on continental drift was the subject of bitter taunts and exclusion by his geological colleagues. Opinions reversed almost overnight when magnetometer traverses of the ocean basins revealed the zebra stripes of sea floor spreading. The young Cambridge student's insight (Frederick Vine) to use the reversing of the earth's magnetic field to check the ocean floor was too late to turn around the detractors before Wegener's death, but perhaps there is a similar bright idea on birds and dinosaurs around the corner that could distil Feduccia's erudition and global grasp of the many disparate facts into a key observation capable of flipping the current consensus in the same way that caused most to change sides over continental drift.

Feduccia provides personal pictures of many of the dino-bird protagonists, placing them with their academic details and acting as a voice for their quotations, which are variously astonishing in their arrogance, or prescience, or insight. He is very fair in this, considering the *ad hominem* flak that he has personally had to endure over the years. He is, or was, friends with many on the other side of the controversy, like the late John Ostrom, whose ground-up hypothesis for the evolution of bird flight has perhaps added more fuel and acolytes to it than have all the bones and feathers combined, and who is affectionately portrayed. Among the quotations are some that will surprise even those with the slightest interest in science, unless they happen to be creationists. Take this one for instance:-Some protagonists of the bird-dino thesis have complained that antagonists, like Feduccia, have refused to desist in their efforts after failing to dislodge the thesis from its dominant perch after 20 years of trying! They wish. The history of science is littered with many examples of dogma that persisted for many times this short period before being overturned, one example

being Alfred Wegener's proposal of continental drift that I already mentioned. This complaint is an admission by the dino-bird advocates that they are championing dogma. Perhaps this book will serve to stimulate more challenges of that dogma from bright young students like the originator of the magnetometer traverse for sea floor spreading.

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David Lang was said to be a farmer who lived near Gallatin, Tennessee. On September 23, 1880 he supposedly vanished into thin air while walking through a field near his home. His wife, children, and two men who were passing by in a buggy all witnessed his disappearance.

Frank Edwards included the following description of Lang's disappearance in his book *Stranger Than Science* (1959):

David Lang had not taken more than half a dozen steps when he disappeared in full view of all those present. Mrs. Lang screamed. The children, too startled to realize what had happened, stood mutely. Instinctively, they all ran toward the spot where Lang had last been seen a few seconds before. Judge Peck and his companion, the Judge's brother-in-law, scrambled out of their buggy and raced across the field. The five of them arrived on the spot of Lang's disappearance almost simultaneously. There was not a tree, not a bush, not a hole to mar the surface. And not a single clue to indicate what had happened to David Lang.

The grownups searched the field around and around, and found nothing. Mrs. Lang became hysterical and had to be led screaming into the house. Meanwhile, neighbors had been alerted by the frantic ringing of a huge bell that stood in the side yard, and they spread the alarm. By nightfall scores of people were on the scene, many of them with lanterns. They searched every foot of the field in which Lang had last been seen a few hours before. They stamped their feet on the dry hard sod in hope of detecting some hole into which he might have fallen -- but they found none.

David Lang was gone. He had vanished in full view of his wife, his two children, and the two men in the buggy. One second he was there, walking across the sunlit field, the next instant he was gone.

Eventually the grass around where Lang had disappeared turned yellow in a fifteen-foot diameter circle, suggesting that some form of energy had mysteriously transported him away.

Seven months later his children were said to have heard their father's voice faintly calling out for help as they played near the spot of his disappearance, but eventually the sound of his voice faded away. They never heard his voice again.

Source of the Legend

The story of Lang's disappearance attracted the attention of researchers during the second half of the twentieth century, after versions of the tale were published by Edwards in *Stranger Than Science*, as well as by Harold Wilkins in *Strange Mysteries of Time and Space* (1958). Both Wilkins and Edwards claimed the story was a true, unexplained mystery.

Numerous researchers subsequently tried to track down evidence that would confirm the

story's authenticity, but nothing has ever been found. No nineteenth-century newspaper accounts of Lang's disappearance have ever been located. Nor do census records indicate that such a man ever lived.

During the 1970s, researchers who contacted a Tennessee librarian named Hershhal Payne unearthed a possible source for the tale. Payne said that he had heard some people attribute the tale to a well-known hoaxer who lived in Tennessee during the 1880s, Joseph Mulhattan. Supposedly Mulhattan invented the tale while participating in a lying contest, and with time the story became part of local legend. But despite this rumor, there is no evidence that Mulhattan was the source of the tale.

It is more likely that the tale of David Lang was invented by the mystery-novel writer Stuart Palmer. In July 1953 Palmer published the earliest known account of the Lang story in *FATE Magazine*. Palmer's article was almost certainly the source that both Wilkins and Edwards later relied upon.

Palmer claimed that the tale had been told to him by Sarah Lang, the daughter of David Lang. But in reality, Palmer probably lifted the idea for the tale from a short story by Ambrose Bierce, "The Difficulty of Crossing a Field," which Bierce included in his story collection *Can Such Things Be?* (1893). Bierce's story describes a plantation owner who vanishes into thin air. In his 1953 article, Palmer claimed that Bierce's story was inspired by the Lang incident. However, the opposite is most likely true -- the Lang tale written by Palmer is almost certainly a reworking of Bierce's story.

- anomalyinfo.com. "The Mystery of David Lang."
- Edwards, Frank. (1959). *Stranger Than Science*. Bantam Books.

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Sir Richard Phillips (1767-1840) founded the *Leicester Herald* in 1792. One day, while preparing the paper for print, he is said to have perpetrated a hoax that became legendary among journalists. The story, told in Phillips' own words, was first reported almost one hundred years after the fact in the journal *Notes and Queries*:

One evening, before one of our publications, my men and a boy overturned two or three columns of the paper in type. We had to get ready in some way for the coaches, which, at four o'clock in the morning, required four or five hundred papers. After every exertion we were short nearly a column; but there stood on the galleys a tempting column of pie. It suddenly struck me that this might be thought Dutch. I made up the column, overcame the scruples of the foreman, and so away the country edition went with its philological puzzle, to worry the honest agricultural reader's head. There was plenty of time to set up a column of plain English for the local edition.

A postscript adds that Sir Richard claimed he later met a man from Nottingham who had kept the "Dutch Mail" edition of the *Leicester Herald* for thirty-four years, hoping to one day get it translated.



An eighteenth-century print shop

The tale is probably an urban legend. There is no surviving copy of the "Dutch Mail" edition of the *Leicester Herald*. The *Notes and Queries* article also observes that similar tales were told of other newspapers. To receive Hoax Museum blog posts by email, enter your email address: [via Feedburner](#)



The Ghostly Drummer of Tedworth was a case of suspected poltergeist activity. In the early 1660s John Mompesson of Wiltshire began to hear strange noises in his home. There was the sound of a drum beating, as well as scratching and panting noises. Objects seemed to move of their own accord in the house, and sometimes a strange sulphureous smell lingered in the air.

Mompesson believed that a man he had helped send to jail, a drummer named William Drury, had, through some form of witchcraft, caused a malevolent spirit to invade his home. The case attracted interest throughout England, and many people came to witness the spirit for themselves. However, when the King sent two representatives to investigate the haunting, they found no evidence of supernatural activity.

Skeptics, of which there were many, dismissed the entire thing as a hoax. They suggested that Mompesson himself may have been behind it, either to profit from those who came to see the spirit, or to decrease the value of the house (which was rented). Another possible culprit was Mompesson's servants, who seemed quite pleased at the travails of their master, and who often taunted him by pointing out that he could never fire them because no one else would agree to work for him under such conditions.

Paranormal Ghost Hoaxes Hoaxes Before 1700

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Can you explain why you believe the Tedworth Drummer to be a "probable hoax"? To many it's a well-documented historical poltergeist attack, conforming to standard patterns of poltergeist behaviour, especially refusing to manifest when external investigators are present. I agree that the Philadelphia case could well be a hoax, but the letter of April 1730 stated: '.. two local Reverends who had recently had an encounter with an angry, drum-beating ghost which was described as being "not a whit less obstreperous, than the Tedsworth Tympanist."' - this isn't the same as saying it actually was the Tedworth spirit, merely that it bore comparison. To then conclude that because the second case was almost certainly a hoax, then the first must probably have been fake, doesn't hold water. The two cases are unrelated, and at no point does the second account say that they are, bar the nature of the manifestation. I've researched anomalous phenomena for many years now, and quite happily concede that many reports are either mistaken or indeed outright hoaxes, but to be honest the Tedworth account, even three centuries on, is still held by many to be a solid case study.
Posted by Stu Neville on Sat Nov 15, 2003 at 07:18 AM

Stu,

In my account I lay out a number of reasons to suspect why the first Tedworth Drummer could be a hoax. Let me quote from the article:

"First of all, no one was ever allowed to inspect his cellar. Why not? Was someone hiding down there creating all the sounds and commotion? Second of all, the drumming almost

always happened at night and seemed to come from outside the house, not inside of it. In other words, someone could easily have been hiding outside banging on the walls of the house with a hammer. Finally, the King himself sent some gentlemen to investigate the haunting, but when they arrived they found no evidence of spectral activity at all." Personally I think this is enough to label the event a 'probable hoax'. My view is that if a 'haunting' can easily be attributed to human agency, then it should be. There's no reason to invoke ghosts if a phenomenon could easily have been performed by mischievous humans.
Posted by Alex on Sun Nov 16, 2003 at 10:23 PM

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Posted on October 9, 2014 8 Comments



"The giant of Happy Valley Esquival(?) [sic]. Sent to Professor Flower at Nat Hist Mus and returned to the owner Left McCallum." Source: British Museum.

When I was looking for more information about the Coast Salish grave houses I pictured a few days ago, I ran into these images from the British Museum. They show the torso and head of a large human figure, carved out of wood. The height of the sculpture is 4 foot 9 inches, meaning the whole sculpture, assuming it once had legs, would have stood well over seven feet tall. So, a giant indeed. There is very little information about the sculpture, other than it comes from happy Valley, "Esquival" – clearly meaning Esquimalt – a neighbouring municipality to the west of Victoria. The next municipality to the west is Colwood, and indeed it has a prominent "Happy Valley Road" running through it into Metchosin. While at the first glance the sculpture doesn't appear to be a typical NW Coast sculpture, I think there's reason to at least consider that possibility.



Detail, the "giant of Happy Valley Esquival(?) [sic]. Sent to Professor Flower at Nat Hist Mus and returned to the owner Left McCallum." Source: British Museum.

I'm no expert in any of this, but bear with me. The caption suggests it was taken to Professor Flower at the Natural History Museum, and while elsewhere the photo is described as "early 20th century" Professor Flower, also a noted amateur Anthropologist, retired in 1898 and died in 1899. I'd suggest this dates the sculpture to no later than the late 19th century.

1. Monumental, naturalistic sculpture is well known from historic Coast Salish settlements and particularly graveyards. We saw just such an image in my last post here. The sculpture is made of a single piece of

wood, and is heavily weathered, so we can infer it spent a lot of time outdoors. The description reads "Photograph (black and white); profile of a carved wooden human torso on a plinth, from Vancouver Island," but it's not really on a plinth, in fact it is just on an ad hoc stack of slabs and leans back on some cloth pressed against the wall.

2. The sculpture appears to have had its arms cut off and also to be cut off, crudely, at the hips. I suspect this happened to make it more convenient to pack in a crate back to the UK. On the profile below you can see what look like false-starts by the saw used on the shoulders. It also makes it fit with a European tradition of broken torsos. Whether the arms were spread wide (necessitating joinery I suspect) or, more likely, bent to the front, it's hard to say.

3. The frank depiction of external genitalia would be unexpected in Victorian Canada settler society. However, some of the large, naturalistic “welcome figures” on the NW Coast anatomically correct – see this Coast Salish example by Simon Charlie.

4. The owner of the sculpture took it to a Natural History museum where it was photographed, suggesting to me it was not considered to be fine art carved by an artist of European descent. Indeed, the owner took it to an amateur Anthropologist at the museum. I think that’s what you would do at the time if you suspected or knew the sculpture was non-European in origin. The owner is listed as “Left McCallum” which could be “Lester” or, I suppose, Lieutenant. By the way, there is a McCallum road not that far from Colwood, near Florence Lake. I’m sure someone knows who this McCallum is.

5. The face is carved as a strange mixture of skull-like and life-like components. The eyes are rectangular sockets. The vomer is clearly visible, though the nose itself is seen in the profile, below. Yet the lips are carved, and the face lacks the toothy rictus of a typical representation of a skull. However, close attention to the lips shows them to be very wide, down-turned and almost stylized in a way familiar to NW Coast formline art. Interest in the ribs is something one commonly sees in pictographs and petroglyphs, and on this sculpture as well. Indeed, compare this Salish spindle-whorl with prominent ribs and lips, navel, and exposed genitalia.



Spindle whorl. Source: historymuseum.ca

6. The head appears to have a groove or indentation around the brow, making it easy to fit a hat to it, as in the previously-cited example.

7. Where Happy Valley Road meets Metchosin Road near Parry Bay is an area with particularly numerous defensive sites, village sites and a rich funerary landscape. Equally, Happy Valley itself appears to drain into Witty’s Lagoon, also an area of high cultural importance close to Albert Head. A large sculpture would be consistent with these kinds of places.

8. I’m up on Quadra Island at the moment, and Pete and I searched through the online Daily British Colonist and found no mention of “the Giant of Happy Valley”, so it doesn’t seem this was a well-known tourist attraction or anything.

Anyway, I’ll be the first to admit this doesn’t look like a “typical” Northwest Coast sculpture. And I don’t want to do some sort of weird exercise in cherry-picking this and that to shove this thing into a preconceived box. But what do we really know of monumental figures from southern Vancouver Island? Not much, I reckon. Coast Salish art is often overlooked in favour of some of the more rigid formline NW Coast Art. Its not as well documented and it’s not what most peoples’ minds go to when thinking of the regional artistic heritage.

I think there is as much reason to suppose this is a scavenged and mutilated monumental Coast Salish sculpture, which perhaps once welcomed people to a Metchosin village, or

memorialized the dead at a graveyard, as there is to think it is the odd product of an eccentric settler. If so, it's a rather important piece, and one that should be repatriated, if it still exists.



The giant of Happy Valley Esquimalt(?) [sic]. Sent to Professor Flower at Nat Hist Mus and returned to the owner Left McCallum. Source: British Museum.

This entry was posted in anthropology, First Nations, history, Northwest Coast, Vancouver Island and tagged art, Coast Salish, Colwood, Esquimalt, Metchosin, Salish, sculpture, Songhees, Victoria BC. Bookmark the permalink.

1. Darcy | October 9, 2014 at 11:26 am | Reply

Thanks for this provocative post Quentin. I agree, while not typically Coast Salish (whatever that means), there are many attributes that should make us think twice about this. The semi-skeletal features for sure, which Roy Carlson has published on several times—and appear early at Pender Canal almost 4000 years ago and continue on into the ethnographic period. Contextually, there are many burial cairns and likely other more recent mortuary features in the Happy Valley area of Metchosin, and perhaps this is a marker from one of these cemeteries. I wonder if the “owner” Left McCallum is Captain A.E. McCallum. Borrowing from the excellent Colwood Pioneer cemetery website

(<https://colwood.civicweb.net/Documents/DocumentDisplay.aspx?Id=58211>), McCallum: “was born in St. Petersburg, Russia in 1839 of British parents. He entered the Imperial British Army and rose to captain in the 91st Argyllshire Highlanders. During the 1850’s he commanded an elite guard to protect Queen Victoria from the Fenian (Irish terrorists) threat. Captain McCallum retired from the army and immigrated to Canada in 1886. The McCallum’s first residence in Victoria was the Old Admiralty house off Esquimalt Road. Later they settled in Colwood. McCallum obtained notoriety in 1885 when he purchased what was called the ‘stoneman’ and attempted to export it to the British Museum claiming it to be a petrified human. Originally shipped from San Francisco, it was in fact a piece of rock shaped like a man that had been buried and dug up a few years later in Sooke. McCallum bought the item and was attempting to ship it to England when he was stopped by a Mr. Collector Hamley, head of Customs Victoria. McCallum was later involved in a number of litigations over some of his many purchases...”.

The timing is right, since this McCallum died in 1899, in the ballpark when the photo was taken.

2. qmackie | October 9, 2014 at 6:21 pm | Reply

But did McCallum move to the UK? Interestingly we did come across that stone giant story when searching the Colonist. Bizarre. Maybe he was a serial hoaxer and carved this himself, if it is the same McCallum

The person who rather rudely commented (now deleted) that it was a giant Jesus might well be right, Pete and I discussed that. The raised shoulders and sunken abdomen are consistent with that. But McCallum in England may have been, I think, under the

impression he had an ethnographic curio, for him to take it to what was then a division of the British Museum.

That Colwood site looks interesting but throws up a .aspx error in both firefox and chrome.

• Darcy | October 9, 2014 at 8:36 pm | Reply

Hmm, the McCallum I was writing about is buried at the Colwood pioneer cemetery... It seems, in my reading, that he may have been an amateur antiquarian trying to cash-in like other settlers of this era. There was certainly a market for this. The happy valley figure could be a historic and non salish carving, but its the face that is so evocative of the kind of skeletal motif present in the earlier art of the region. Maybe a syncretism of christian/salish mortuary statuary?

■ qmackie | October 9, 2014 at 9:24 pm | Reply

Plus, how many crucifixions have you seen that depict His genitalia? Here's one by Michaelangelo (and no you don't want to see the rest of my google results....) so I guess it's not unknown, but very much the exception.



I like the syncretism idea – cultural remix; emulation of the obviously important Christian iconography with a Salish sensibility through supersized outdoor sculpture.

3. Kim Poirier | October 9, 2014 at 9:52 pm | Reply

Did you check with the database at the Royal BC Museum? The Ethnology Collection or Anthropological Photos collection may have something. Brian

Seymour manages that collection (Ethnology) 250 387-2440.

• qmackie | October 9, 2014 at 11:06 pm | Reply

Thanks Kim, good idea. I quickly searched the online BC Archives and didn't find anything of note. Asking Brian would be a good idea. It's such a striking sculpture that I almost feel like if it wasn't buried in a vast British Museum archive it'd be quite well known in these parts or to this crowd....

4. Pete | October 13, 2014 at 3:50 pm | Reply

Rather than being a hoaxer himself, it seems McCallum was the dupe of conmen. The most relevant issues of the Colonist (there are others, all viewed free at <http://www.britishcolonist.ca/index.html>) are Aug 15, 1885, p3, "The Petrified Giant" and

Feb 18, 1887, p1 "The Hope of the Liberals".

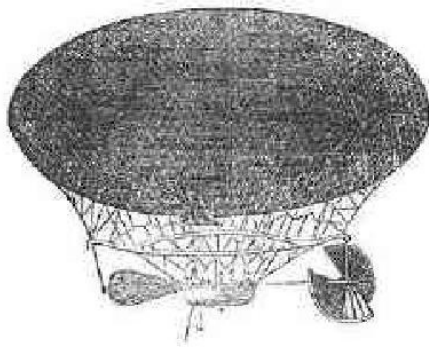
The Happy Valley stone man was carved of limestone, then imported from San Francisco, buried for a time in Happy Valley, then dug up, publicised, and put up for sale. It seems like everyone knew it was a fake except McCallum. It may have been around for some time. "The patent artificial stone man is doing Winnipeg. Wary Winnipeggers can learn something of this enterprise by writing to almost anyone in Victoria, B.C." Aug 29, 1879. p2. McCallum arrived in Victoria after this date.

He paid 300 pounds for it, and believed it to be a fossilized human, even after it was rejected as a fake by Canadian customs, and a well-publicised court case. "The purchaser still has faith that the giant is a fossil, having had extensive experience in such matters, and purchased it for the purpose of forwarding it to the British museum."

He later ran for MP, but his opponents never let the public forget that he was a fool who had been taken in by the stone man. "The gallant captain is a susceptible individual... as much taken in... as he was by the famous Happy Valley stone man..." (Feb 04, 1887, p2, "Political Notes"). "This city and district might as well send a stone man to Ottawa as Captain McCallum" (Mar 04, 1887, p2 "The Do-Nothings").

My guess about the "Giant of Happy Valley" photos at the British Museum: they are actually of McCallum's fake stone man. He persisted, either in good faith or to save face, in sending it to the museum. Or he just sent photos, which could be why the museum noted it as being made of wood – no one there saw it in person. It looks like limestone. It was propped up on all those shims because it was heavy...

/* Copyright 2014 Evernote Corporation. All rights reserved. */ .en-markup-crop-options { top: 18px !important; left: 50% !important; margin-left: -100px !important; width: 200px !important; border: 2px rgba(255,255,255,.38) solid !important; border-radius: 4px !important; } .en-markup-crop-options div div:first-of-type { margin-left: 0px !important; }



The *New York Sun* included a broadside, or extra page, in the midday issue of its April 13, 1844 edition, announcing that the famous European balloonist Monck Mason had succeeded in flying across the Atlantic Ocean in 75 hours. This was major news, being the first time the Atlantic had ever been crossed in a balloon.

The balloon, named the *Victoria*, had supposedly taken off from England on a trip to Paris, but had been blown off course due to a propeller accident and ended up floating across the Atlantic and landing on Sullivan's Island, near Charleston, South Carolina.

The story was quickly revealed to be a hoax, authored by Edgar Allan Poe. Monck Mason, however, was a real person who had ballooned from London to Weilburg, Germany in 1836, a journey which he had described in 1837 in a book, *Account of the Late Aeronautical Expedition from London to Weilburg*.

An illustration of the "Steering Balloon *Victoria*" accompanied Poe's article. Poe had obtained this image by redrawing it from the frontispiece of an anonymous 1843 pamphlet (the author of which was probably Monck Mason) titled *Remarks on the Ellipsoidal Balloon, propelled by the Archimedean Screw, described as the New Aerial Machine*.

On the day of the article's publication, Poe stood on the steps of the *Sun*'s building in New York City telling crowds that his own story was a hoax. But apparently, amidst the general excitement, not many people paid attention to him. He later wrote an account in the *Columbia Spy* of the scene following the publication of the balloon news:

On the morning (Saturday) of its announcement, the whole square surrounding the 'Sun' building was literally besieged, blocked up—ingress and egress being alike impossible, from a period soon after sunrise until about two o'clock P.M.... I never witnessed more intense excitement to get possession of a newspaper. As soon as the few first copies made their way into the streets, they were bought up, at almost any price, from the news-boys, who made a profitable speculation beyond doubt. I saw a half-dollar given, in one instance, for a single paper, and a shilling was a frequent price. I tried, in vain, during the whole day, to get possession of a copy.

In 1749 several British noblemen, the Duke of Portland and the Earl of Chesterfield, were discussing the gullibility of the public. They decided to test its credulity by designing a test. The Duke bet the Earl that if he advertised that an impossible feat would be performed — a man jumping into a quart bottle — they would still "find fools enough in London to fill a playhouse and pay handsomely for the privilege of being there." The Earl accepted the bet.

The Advertisement

The following advertisement appeared in the London papers during the first week of January:

At the New Theatre in the Haymarket, on Monday next, the 16th instant, is to be seen a Person who performs the several most surprising things following, -- viz., 1st. He takes a common walking Cane from any of the Spectators, and thereupon plays the music of every Instrument now in use, and likewise sings to surprising perfection. 2dly. He presents you with a common Wine Bottle, which any of the spectators may first examine; this Bottle is placed on a Table in the middle of the Stage, and he (without any equivocation) goes into it, in the sight of all the Spectators, and sings in it; during his stay in the bottle, any Person may handle it, and see plainly that it does not exceed a common Tavern Bottle. Those on the Stage, or in the Boxes, may come in masked habits (if agreeable to them); and the performer, if desired, will inform them who they are. Stage, 7s. 6d. Boxes, 5s. Pit, 3s. Gallery, 2s. Tickets to be had at the Theatre. To begin a half an hour after six o'clock. The performance continues about two hours and a half.

Note.--If any Gentlemen or Ladies (after the above Performance), either single or in company, in or out of mask, is desirous of seeing a representation of any deceased Person, such as Husband or Wife, Sister or Brother, or any intimate Friend of either sex, upon making a gratuity to the Performer, shall be gratified by seeing and conversing with them for some minutes, as if alive; likewise, if desired, he will tell you your most secret thoughts in your Past life, and give you a full view of persons who have injured you, whether dead or alive. For those Gentlemen and Ladies who are desirous of seeing this last part, there is a private Room provided.

These performances have been seen by most of the crowned Heads of Asia, Africa, and Europe, and never appeared public anywhere but once; but will wait on any at their Houses, and perform as above for five Pounds each time. A proper guard is appointed to prevent disorder.

Reaction

The advertisement generated strong interest throughout London, and on the night of the performance every seat in the theater was sold. Even standing room was crowded.

The hour of the performance arrived, and the crowd eagerly waited, but nothing happened. No entertainment had been provided. There was not even music to calm the crowd as it

waited, and eventually as the minutes stretched into an hour, people grew unruly. There were cries for the performance to begin. Men banged on the floor with their canes and feet. Eventually a theater representative appeared on stage, apologizing profusely, and announced that if the performer did not arrive within 15 minutes, all money would be refunded at the door.

This announcement was greeted with groans and hisses. Someone in the pit cried out that if the ladies and gentlemen would pay double price he would crawl into a pint bottle. This generated laughter.

But suddenly a gentleman in one of the boxes threw a lighted candle onto the stage, and immediately general chaos broke out. The frustrated audience began ripping up the theater, tearing up seats and benches. People rushed to leave, abandoning their hats and wigs in the panic. Everything portable in the theater was hauled outside and thrown onto a bonfire. The box-receipts were stolen.

Media Response

The hoax served as the inspiration for much humor in the media. One paper wrote that the conjurer had been ready and willing to appear on the fatal night, but just prior to the performance a gentleman had begged him for a private view. The conjurer consented to crawl into a bottle for five pounds. The moment he had done so the gentleman corked up the bottle, placed it in his pocket, and made off:

Thus the poor man being bit himself, in being confined in the Bottle and in a Gentleman's Pocket, could not be in another Place; for he never advertised he would go into two Bottles at one and the same time. He is still in the Gentleman's custody, who uncorks him now and then to feed him; but his long confinement has so damped his Spirits that instead of singing and dancing he is perpetually crying and cursing his ill Fate. But though the Town have been disappointed of seeing him go into the Bottle, in a few days they will have the pleasure of seeing him come out of the Bottle; of which timely notice will be given in the daily Papers.

Advertisements spoofed the performance. One advertiser announced he would jump down his own throat, a second offered to change himself into a rattle, a third to shoot himself with two pistols: "the first shot to be directed through his abdomen to which will be added another through his brain, the whole to conclude with staggering convulsions, grinning, etc., in a manner never before publicly attempted." A fourth advertiser claimed that if spectators would pull their eyes out, he would replace them in their sockets:

THE MOST WONDERFUL AND SURPRISING DOCTOR BENIMBE ZAMMANPOANGO,
Oculist and Body Surgeon to Emperor Monoemungi, who will perform on Sunday next at the Little T -- in the Haymarket the following surprising Operations, -- viz.: 1st. He desires any one of the Spectators only to pull out his own Eyes, which as soon as he has done, the Doctor will show them to any Lady or Gentleman then present to convince them there is no Cheat, and then replace them in the Sockets as perfect and entire as ever. 2dly. He desires

any officer or other to rip up his own Belly which when he has done, he (without any Equivocation) takes out his Bowels, washes them, and returns them to their place, without the Person's suffering the least hurt, 3dly. He opens the head of a J -- of P --, takes out his Brains, and exchanges them for those of a Calf, the Brains of a Beau for those of an Ass, and the Heart of a Bully for that of a Sheep: which Operations will render the Persons more sociable and rational Creatures than they ever were in their Lives. And to convince the Town that no imposition is intended, he desires no Money until the Performance is over. Boxes, 5 guin. Pit, 3. Gallery, 2.

N.B.--The famous Oculist will be there, and honest S -- F -- H -- will come if he can. Ladies may come masked, so may Fribbles. The Faculty and Clergy gratis. The Orator would be here, but is engaged."

Identity of the Pranksters

In the days after the theater riot, attempts were made to find out who had been responsible for the prank. Suspicion immediately fell on Samuel Foote, an actor who was one of London's most notorious pranksters. However, Foote insisted he had nothing to do with it.

The owner of the theater, John Potter, was also named as a suspect, but he too declared his innocence, explaining that a man unknown to him had made all the arrangements for renting the theater. Potter also noted that he would have refunded the cost of all the tickets to the audience, if the receipts had not been stolen during the riot.

The true pranksters, the Duke and the Earl, lay low. It was not until years later that their secret leaked out.

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During the final decades of the nineteenth century, a conservation movement coalesced around a campaign to save the nation's birds, whose populations were under pressure because of the fashionability of hats decorated with feathers. The Audobon Society and the American Ornithological Union both formed out of this campaign. The campaign was given renewed urgency in the early 1890s when a report appeared in various publications, including the *Northwest Sportsman* of Oregon and the *Sportsmen's Review* of Chicago, that millions of waterfowl eggs were being collected in breeding grounds in Alaska and then shipped east for sale. The eggs, it was said, were a source of dried albumen used in a variety of commercial applications such as photography, the manufacture of leather, and candy-making. The magazines warned that the collection of these eggs threatened the existence of the duck and geese populations of the entire west.

The duck egg scare soon reached congress. On January 26, 1895 Senator John H. Mitchell of Oregon spoke to the Senate and declared that the eggging was a corporate plot. He said, "It is a fact, that... certain corporations have been formed and large amounts of capital invested for the purpose of gathering in these breeding grounds and packing and shipping annually vast millions of the eggs of these ducks and geese." Mitchell also asserted that on the Canadian Pacific Railway "not infrequently as many as 1,000, 1,200, and as high as 1,800 barrels of these eggs are forwarded in one train of cars." He asked for an investigation into the eggging, to pave the way for legislation designed to protect the eggs of wildfowl.

The *New York Tribune* published Mitchell's speech, and the Oregon legislative assembly petitioned Congress to endorse his call for an investigation. But on June 22, 1895 the editors of *Forest and Stream* exposed the duck egg scare to be nothing more than a hoax, or, in their words, "an unmitigated fake." They had conducted an investigation into the story and had found that neither the railways nor the custom collectors had any records of wildfowl eggs being shipped from Alaska. Furthermore, the nation's largest importer of albumen, Klipstein & Company, knew nothing about Alaskan eggs. They obtained their eggs from Europe.

Forest and Stream suggested the duck egg story may have been invented as a red herring to distract the American public from the real cause of the decline in bird populations—overhunting. If this was the case, then the diversionary tactic did not succeed, as in the following decades a large amount of legislation was passed regulating hunting and protecting the nation's wildlife.

- Sherwood, Morgan. "The Great Duck Egg Fake". *Alaska Journal* 1977 7(2): 88-94.

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[archaicwonder](#)

October 25th 2014, 3:38:46 pm · 3 hours ago



The Green Lady of Newton Castle

"Once in Newton Castle there lived a family with a beautiful daughter, Lady Jean, who fell in love with Lord Ronald. Although they were happy together, they could rarely find any time to be together. Soon Ronald had, to all intents and purposes, lost all interest in the girl who had once been his sweetheart.

Lady Jean, refusing to give up faith in her love, dressed herself in her most expensive and attractive clothes and jewels, to make Ronald notice her, but instead he barely looked at her at all. Unsure of what to do, Lady Jean's heart was all but broken as she sat in her bower, until the local wise woman hobbled up to her. She had been watching Lady Jean's predicament and despaired at her attempts to regain the affections of her love with fine clothes and jewellery. 'A love won in that manner', she said, 'was not worth having'. If Lord Ronald was indeed the man she wanted as her husband she would have to take a different road.

Eagerly she leaned towards the woman asking for all the advice she had to offer, to which the old woman responded:

First, you must cut some of the long grasses that grow in the kirkyard. Then you must go to the Gallows Knowe and break off a branch of the lone rowan tree on which they hanged the three murderers. Bind the branch with the grasses and carry it down at gloaming to the Coble Pool on the Ericht. Sit yourself on the Corbie Stane, shut your eyes tight and don't open them till morning.

The Lady rushed off to do as the wise woman told her to, collecting the grasses and the rowan branch before hurrying back to her room in Newton Castle where she bound the grasses around the branch and there she sat and waited.

As the sun went down and before the moon had chance to rise, she set off for the Coble Pool, where the

boat ferried passengers across the Ericht. She pulled up her skirt sitting herself down on the Corbie Stane. In the gloom she settled and soon it grew darker, though Lady Jean could not tell, as the crone had told her to keep her eyes shut. However, though her sight was lost, her hearing wasn't, and through the night she listened to the bubbling and raging of the water through the rocks, leaves rustling, branches creaking, animals and insects piercing the night's silence. And then suddenly another, strange sound could be heard, a strange voice emerging from the waters...

*Warlocks, wabsters, ane an aa,
Weave the witchin' claith;
Warp o' grass an' weft o' rash,
Weave the wab o' death!"*

Yet still Lady Jean kept her eyes tightly shut until the morning. As she felt her skin heat from the sun as it rose and the cock crowed she dared to open her eyes after her night. Stepping back on the bank it was only then that she noticed the change that had occurred. She was all dressed in fairy green.

When she returned to the castle she found Lord Ronald awaiting an audience with her, his gaze riveted to her. He begged her to marry him and in accepting it was done as soon as was possible. Lady Jean had never looked so beautiful in her long green gown, but even as she and her love danced a terrible voice rang in her ears, the same cry as on the Corbie Stane. Fainting she fell to the floor.

There was uproar as the guests saw the helpless bride being carried to the bedroom prepared for the couple. There as Lord Ronald knelt by her side, she died.

Unable to be buried on the consecrated ground of the kirkyard as she was now forever bound to the fairy world after her enchantment, Lady Jean was carried from her home, still clad in the fairy green dress, up the hill behind Newton Castle to a lovely and calm spot. There she was buried and her grave marked with a simple stone.

Any resident of Blair could tell you the myth of the Green Lady, and how on Halloween night the stone, still hidden in the grass, birls round three times until the ghost of Lady Jean arises from her lonely grave, walks to her old home of Newton Castle, where she goes to the room in which she died and searches for her lost bridegroom. As children, people would go and search for it, to say they had solved the myth, but as we grow up we realise it's just a sad story of a woman who never let go of her first love." ([source: BBC News](#))

Dating from the 14th century, Newton Castle is home to the current chieftain of the Clan Macpherson, Sir William Macpherson. It is reportedly connected by a tunnel with Ardblair Castle. Newton Castle is located in Blairgowrie, Scotland.

Of all the holy relics that circulated throughout medieval Europe, relics associated with Jesus Christ — anything he supposedly touched or used during his life — were the most prized. By this measure, no relic was more valuable than the Holy Foreskin since it was an actual body part of Christ. In fact, the foreskin is the only body part the Bible specifically mentions being removed from Christ during his life (eight days after his birth) and which presumably stayed behind on Earth after he ascended into Heaven.

The circumcision of Christ was a popular subject in religious art during the Late Medieval and Early Modern periods. Below are just a few examples, selected at random from the numerous depictions of the scene that were made.



Anonymous artist, circa 1485



Circumcision of Christ, detail from the Twelve Apostles Altar by Friedrich Herlin, 1466



Circumcision of Christ, by Francesco Bissolo, circa first half of the 16th century



The

Circumcision of Christ, by Bartolomeo Biscaino, 17th century

But the Holy Foreskin didn't appear only in art. The actual, physical artifact — or what people claimed was the real thing — was a popular object of veneration.

The Holy Foreskin first made an appearance in medieval Europe around 800 ad, when King Charlemagne presented it as a gift to Pope Leo III. Charlemagne said it had been given to him by an angel.

However, rival foreskins soon began to pop up all over Europe. All told, twenty-one different churches claimed to have the Holy Foreskin, often at the same time. Various miraculous powers were attributed to these foreskins. In particular, they were supposed to be able to protect women during childbirth.

Given the glut of Holy Foreskins, churches made efforts to have their foreskin authenticated by Church leaders as the sole genuine article. In the early 12th century, the monks of San Giovanni in Laterano, Rome asked Pope Innocent III to rule on the authenticity of their foreskin, but he declined to do so. Later, the monks of Charroux claimed their foreskin to be the only real one, pointing out that it apparently yielded drops of blood. This convinced Pope Clement VII (1523-1534) who declared theirs to be the authentic thing.

Some medieval theologians argued that all the Holy Foreskins necessarily had to be frauds since the actual Holy Foreskin had, they asserted, ascended into Heaven with Christ. The 17th century theologian Leo Allatius speculated in his essay *De Praeputio Domini Nostri Jesu Christi Diatriba* that the holy foreskin had ascended into heaven at the same time as Jesus, and had become the rings of Saturn.



The rings of Saturn, or Christ's foreskin?

The Catholic Church eventually sought to extract itself from the Holy Foreskin controversy, deciding that it was rather unseemly for so much attention

to be paid to Christ's private parts. It adopted the view that all the rival foreskins were frauds, and in 1900 made it a crime punishable by excommunication to write or speak about the Holy Foreskin.

- Mattelaer, JJ, et al. (2007). "The Circumcision of Jesus Christ". *The Journal of Urology*. 178: 31-34.

- [Holy Prepuce, Wikipedia.](#)
- holyprepuce.tumblr.com

Posted by Clidna in Estonia on Thu Jan 31, 2013 at 05:10 PM

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In the first century AD, Roman naturalist Pliny the Elder threw a salamander into a fire. He wanted to see if it could indeed not only survive the flames, but extinguish them, as Aristotle had claimed such creatures could. But the salamander didn't ... uh ... make it.

Yet that didn't stop the legend of the fire-proof salamander (a name derived from the Persian meaning "fire within") from persisting for 1,500 more years, from the Ancient Romans to the Middle Ages on up to the alchemists of the Renaissance. Some even believed it was born in fire, like the legendary Phoenix, only slimier and a bit less dramatic. And that

its fur (huh?) could be used to weave fire-resistant garments.

Part of the problem, it seems, is that in addition to disproving the salamander's powers, Pliny also wrote extensively that it *had* such powers—and then some. His *Natural History*, which has survived over the centuries as a towering catalog of everything from mining to zoology, describes the salamander as such: "It is so chilly that it puts out fire by its contact, in the same way as ice does. It vomits from its mouth a milky slaver [saliva], one touch of which on any part of the human body causes all the hair to drop off, and the portion touched changes its color and breaks out in a tetter," a sort of itchy skin disease.



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Some 500 years later, Saint Isidore of Seville wrote that while other poisonous animals strike their victims individually, the salamander slays "very many at the same time; for if it crawls up a tree, it infects all the fruit with poison and slays those who eat it; nay, even if it falls in a well, the power of the poison slays those who drink it." He also confirmed that it's immune to the effects of fire.

So right away the salamander was mythologized as both a miraculous survivor and

a menace. Indeed, later on in the 1200s, an English writer told of one laying waste to Alexander the Great's army simply by swimming in a river they drank from. All told, 4,000 soldiers and 2,000 horses supposedly perished after consuming the salamander's dirty bath water. Which would be pretty embarrassing, if only it were true.

Now, it was likely Europe's fire salamander, with its vivid yellow-on-black coloration, that

served as the inspiration for the legend, according to Nosson Slifkin in his book *Sacred Monsters*. As you might assume from its conspicuous colors, this species is in fact quite poisonous, secreting a neurotoxin to deter predators. And if it doesn't feel like waiting to be attacked, it can actually fire this secretion at its approaching enemies. While the toxin can cause skin irritation in humans, it's far from capable of poisoning 4,000 soldiers. But it's likely this poisonous nature was simply scaled up for such myths.



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A few centuries later, none other than Leonardo Da Vinci added another curious characteristic to the salamander's repertoire, claiming it "has no digestive organs, and gets no food but from the fire, in which it constantly renews its scaly skin." The alchemist Paracelsus later confirmed this as its diet, elevating the salamander to the status of one of the four "elementals" that he substituted for the classical elements earth, fire, air, and water—the salamander of course being fire.

Salamanders: The Furry Fire-Proof Heroes of the Working Man

It was a bit earlier, in the Middle Ages, when the legend of the fire-proof salamander picked up another facet: asbestos, a highly fire-resistant mineral with fibers we now know can absolutely devastate our lungs, leading to mesothelioma and other awful diseases. You see, before we foolishly packed our modern buildings with the stuff, in the ancient world it was woven into royal garments. According to Pliny, because it doesn't burn, it was used to wrap the dead on funeral pyres, resulting in pure ash unsullied by charred fabric.

Curiously, Marco Polo noted "the real truth is that the Salamander is no beast, as they allege in our part of the world, but is a substance found in the earth." He relates the experiences of a Turkish acquaintance in China, where the man dug up "Salamander," or asbestos as we know it, and processed its fibers into napkins. "When first made these napkins are not very white, but by putting them into the fire for a while they come out as white as snow. And so again whenever they become dirty they are bleached by being put in the fire."

According to the 17th-century British polymath Sir Thomas Browne, asbestos was known metaphorically as "salamander's wool," based on the legendary fireproofing of the critter. But this was misinterpreted as being literal, so medieval bestiaries—the oftentimes vast encyclopedias of life—portrayed the salamander as furry (just *furry*, not a *furry*, thankfully).

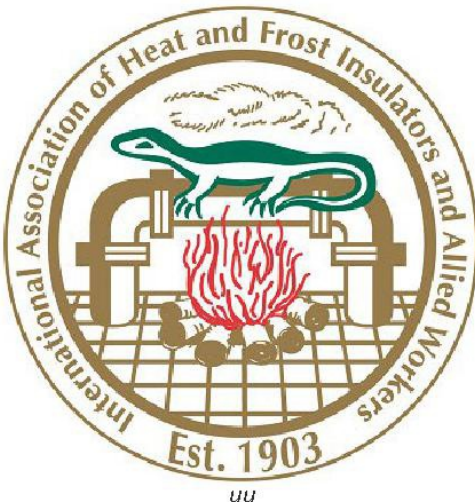
Far from dismissing the salamander's powers entirely, Browne goes on to break down its potential for surviving flames or even extinguishing coals, arguing that the critter's moistness and mucus can indeed protect it from burning up, however briefly. "And therefore some truth we allow in the tradition: truth according unto Galen, that it may for a time resist a flame, or as Scaliger avers, extinguish or put out a coal: for thus much will many humid bodies perform: but that it perseveres and lives in that destructive element, is a fallacious enlargement." (It's safe to assume that salamanders do indeed fare somewhat better than creatures that actually



have fur, but to my knowledge no modern experiments have been done to confirm this on account of, you know, ethics and all.)

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Now, we



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know where the legend of the salamander's toxicity comes from, but what about this resistance to fire? It's unlikely to be a product of folks just tossing them into bonfires, but instead inspired by salamanders in fact spontaneously arising from flames. You see, these amphibians take shelter in rotting logs, which provide them not only protection from predators but protection from desiccation. Ancient peoples likely often found themselves tossing logs into the fire, only to see salamanders legging it out of there, as if being born from flame.

While the legend of the fireproof salamander died with the observations of learned folks like Browne, it survives

today in popular culture—and in logos, of all places. The International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Allied Workers, for instance, still has a salamander sitting calmly over a flame in its logo, a hint of the days when its members used asbestos before the fiendish stuff was banned in the US the 1970s.

So hooray for progress, both in public health and our understanding of zoology. The poor salamander never deserved such scorn, except that one I had as a kid that bit me once. He was a jerk, and I don't miss him at all.

At the beginning of the Civil War wild rumors were sweeping through the northern states about plots to overthrow the government. These plots were supposedly organized by various secret societies of Southern sympathizers. One group in particular, known as the Knights of the Golden Circle, was especially feared. This secret society really did exist, and many northerners feared that its members were organizing in the midwest to lead a pro-Southern insurrection.

Republicans (the party of Abraham Lincoln) played on these popular fears to their advantage by claiming that their Democratic opponents were in league with these secret societies and were intending to bring down the government.



President Franklin Pierce

President Franklin Pierce

Into this atmosphere of paranoia a letter appeared in March of 1862 published by two Republican papers that implicated ex-President Franklin Pierce, a democrat, in one of these feared treasonous plots. The letter appeared to be from a member of the Knights of the Golden Circle and described how "Presdt. P__" (easily recognizable to contemporary readers as an abbreviation for President Pierce) had secretly met with members of the Knights of the Golden Circle during a trip through Michigan, and was in league with them to overthrow the

government.

The letter, which was three pages long, included these passages:

"I have it from the best authority that the League is doing noble work in M__a, even among the F__S.__ at Ft.__. If God continues to prosper our efforts, the hour of a Union between N.& S. is not far distant. Prepared and united, our force will prove irresistible [sic] and the accursed Aj __ G.__ will be swept into the Atlantic.
Presdt. P____ in his passage has drawn many brave and influential men to the League."

The letter was signed in code and dated October 5, 1861.

If the letter was real it would obviously have been serious evidence of treason. However, the letter was not real at all. It was, instead, part of a rather hare-brained hoax hatched by a man named Dr. Guy S. Hopkins.

The genesis of the letter was this: Ex-President Pierce had briefly visited Michigan in September, 1861. He had met with a few friends and reportedly expressed to them his opinion that he didn't like Lincoln and would much prefer to see Joseph Holt as president.

News of these comments leaked out to the editors of a local republican newspaper, and they

reported Pierce's words as evidence of his participation in a treasonous plot, proclaiming, "While in this city, he [Pierce] was closeted with a select circle who are known to be doubtful in their loyalty... Our opinion is Franklin Pierce is a prowling traitor spy."

Dr. Guy S. Hopkins, a staunch democrat, decided to retaliate in defense of Pierce, though he chose a fairly complicated and unlikely means to do so. He penned a false letter, apparently from a member of the Knights of the Golden Circle, detailing various treasonous activities undertaken by "Presdt. P" on a trip through the midwest. His plan was that the letter would be leaked to the Republican press, who would believe it to be true and publish it. Hopkins would then reveal that he had, in fact, written the letter himself, thus revealing the Republicans to be gullible fools.

As Hopkins himself said: "it would be sent to one of the treason-shrieking presses and when exploded would produce much 'fun'."



Secretary of State
William Seward

Secretary of State William Seward

The letter was duly leaked to two Republican papers, the *Detroit Advertiser* and the *Detroit Tribune*, but instead of publishing it they forwarded it to a federal marshal, who then forwarded it to Secretary of State William Seward.

Seward believed the letter to be real and immediately ordered the arrest of possible traitors in Michigan, one of whom happened to be Dr. Hopkins. He also wrote to Pierce and informed him of the charges made against him. Pierce angrily responded, denying all charges of treason.

Meanwhile, Hopkins, in jail, quickly confessed to what he had done, but Seward, learning the truth, decided to suppress the fact that he had been taken in by a hoax. Therefore, he wrote a conciliatory letter back to Pierce saying that the previous letter had been a misunderstanding, but he did not reveal that Hopkins had confessed nor that he knew the charges against the ex-President to be completely false.

This might have been the end of the matter, but then in March 1862, the Republican papers decided to publish Hopkins's letter after all, and other papers throughout the nation quickly reprinted it. This meant that the false charges made against Pierce became highly public, and Pierce felt that he had to officially clear his name.

Pierce's friends in the Senate passed a resolution calling upon Seward to make public the correspondence between him and Pierce, and so clear Pierce's name. However, Seward continued to try to suppress the fact that he had been taken in by Hopkins's phony letter. Therefore, Pierce's friends managed to clandestinely gain the incriminating letters from Seward's files and read them out loud before the senate, thus revealing Seward's attempted cover-up.

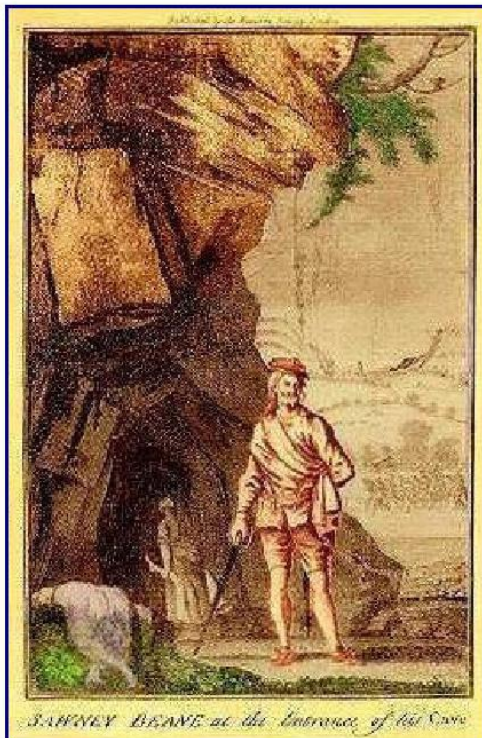
Seward was publicly embarrassed, and Pierce was vindicated. However, the experience left a

bitter taste in Pierce's mouth, and he became a vocal critic of the Lincoln administration for the remainder of the Civil War.

- Klement, Frank L. "Franklin Pierce And The Treason Charges Of 1861-1862". *Historian* 1961 23(4): 436-448.
- Klement, Frank L. "The Hopkins Hoax And Golden Circle Rumors In Michigan: 1861-1862". *Michigan History* 1963 47(1): 1-14.

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★ **SAWNEY & BEAN** ★
 & HIS INGESTUOUS CANNIBAL CLAN

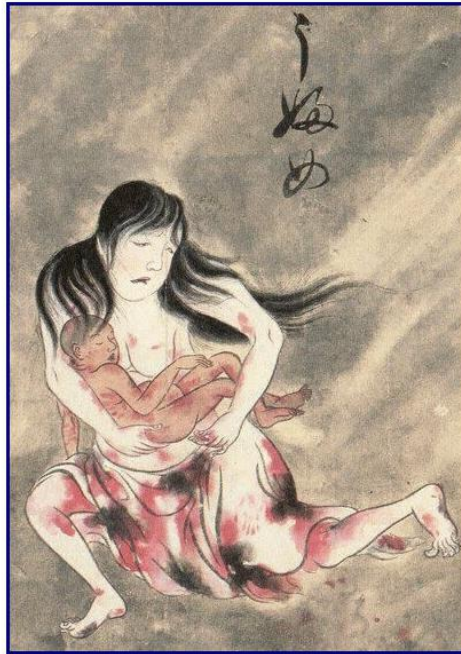
MURDERED AND PICKLED MANY A MAN
 TIL CAUGHT IN THEIR CAVE, BURNT & BLEED WITH NO TRIAL
 AND SENT BACK TO HELL, FOREVER DAMNED

The Hills Have Eyes — The Legend of Sawney Bean,

According to the legend, Sawney Bean was born in East Lothian, Scotland in the 16th century. Unable to make an honest living Bean moved to a cave in the wilderness with his wife where he took up a career as a highwayman. He would ambush and rob any passerbys, and to ensure his location stayed secret he murdered all he robbed. Eventually Bean had a number of children with his wife, who in turn produced a number of grandchildren through incest. Soon the Bean clan reached 48 people, most of whom were born of incestuous brother and sister relationships. In order to feed 46 hungry mouths the clan turned to cannibalism, murdering and consuming any who were unfortunate to be ambushed in the nearby countryside.

In 1600 the Bean's attacked a man and wife on horseback who were returning from a local country fair. Skilled in combat the man was able to fend off the Bean's with his sword and pistols, although his wife was kidnapped, killed, and eaten. The traumatized man reported the events to the magistrate, who in turn reported the murder to King James IV of Scotland. King James IV organized a hunting party of 400 heavily armed soldiers and a number of hounds. When they entered the large cave they were able to corner and capture the Bean family. Scattered among the cave were various human body parts, pickled human meat, personal belongings of victims, and human bones.

The Bean clan was taken to Edinburgh, where they were locked up in Tollbooth Prison. A short time later they were executed, with the men hung, drawn, and quartered and the women burned at the stake.



The Legend of the Ubume, Japan

In Medieval Japanese folklore, the Ubume is the ghost of a woman who died in childbirth. Often the ghost of the woman will appear soaked in blood and wander about crying *obareu! obareu!* (be born! be born!). Typically Ubume are found along travel routes, such as roads or rivers. There the Ubume will ask travelers to hold her baby, just for a moment. When the traveler takes up the swaddled infant, the Ubume will disappear and the infant will become heavier and heavier. When the infant becomes too heavy to hold and is dropped, it is revealed to be a large stone.

One infamous Ubume was said to take up residence at a river crossing in the Mino Province (now modern day Gifu Prefecture). When passersby's crossed the river, the Ubume would appear among the raging waters begging them to take her baby and save its life. Those who took the infant found that it became heavier and heavier until they were drug under the water and drowned.

In the early 11th century AD the samurai Urabe Suetake was traveling with a group of soldiers.

One night in camp the soldiers talked of tales about the Ubume at the river crossing. So frightened were they that they refused to cross the river, a crossing which was to be made the next morning.

The brave samurai Suetake announced "I shall cross the river myself. Right now!".

To prove to his men that there was nothing to fear, he crossed the river, all the while his men stayed in camp out of cowardice. He made it across the river, and was halfway across his return trip when the Ubume appeared to him, begging him to take her baby. Despite the danger, Suetake took the crying infant, which grew heavier and heavier in his arms with each yard he stepped. By the time he reached the shore the bundle would have been too heavy to carry for most, but due to Suetake's superior strength and stamina he continued onward to the camp. By the time he reached the camp the swaddled infant was almost too heavy for even Suetake to handle. When he reached camp he dropped the bundle before his men to show them his great deed. When the swaddling clothes were opened, it was found to be nothing more than a bundle of dead leaves.



In the mid-twelfth century, at a time when European rulers felt threatened by the growing power of Muslim nations on their borders, a letter suddenly appeared from Prester John, who described himself as a Christian king of great wealth living in the far east. The letter was addressed to the Byzantine emperor Manuel Comnenus.

Prester John claimed to be a descendant of one of the Three Magi. He wrote that his kingdom stretched from India to the land where the sun rises, and that it was inhabited by fantastic creatures such as seven-horned bulls, birds so large they could lift and kill an armored man, and horned men with three eyes in the back of their heads. He even claimed there was a fountain of perpetual youth in his kingdom.

The letter circulated throughout all the European courts. In 1177, Pope Alexander III instructed his personal envoy to travel east, search for Prester John, and deliver a reply to his letter. It was hoped Prester John would come to the aid of the Christian nations in Europe, but no response ever came. Nevertheless, European explorers continued to search for the mythical king for centuries.

The true author of the letter remains unknown. Whoever it was, he was familiar with old legends, which he borrowed heavily from — legends such as the tales of Alexander the Great's adventures in the East. Linguistic evidence suggests the letter originated in Italy. The author probably intended to offer hope to the Christian armies fighting the crusades, and in this respect he succeeded, even though the hope was a false one.

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For centuries, people sincerely believed that the dead can rise from their graves. The most famous character is Dracula. In Lower Saxony, Germany, archaeologists found evidence to prove the existence of such zombies.

Legends about vampires and zombies accompany the literary history of mankind. Not that long ago, in the area of the town of Stade (a Hanseatic town in Germany, located in Lower Saxony, between Hamburg and Cuxhaven) a bizarre finding was made, which gave archaeologists reasons to think that they found something that proved the existence of the living dead.

Scientists came to conclusion that our ancestors were not trying to resurrect the dead. On the contrary - they were trying not to let the deceased rise from their graves.

Ludwig Strackerjan, a German national, has an extensive collection of superstitions and legends that he gathered in the duchy of Oldenburg. According to him, more than 150 years ago, the dead were supposed to be buried along with their clothes, a spoon and a needle, with which they could mend their ragged robes. As soon as the coffin would be taken out of the house, people would put down the fire in the hearth. Interestingly, the dead would be buried in fairly deep pits.

What if someone forgot to put out the fire in the hearth, or put a needle in the coffin? In this case, the living would face serious problems as the dead would rise from the grave, becoming a ghost or a zombie.

Archaeologist Daniel Nösler found something near the town of Stade that proved such practices. Demonstrating old photographs of excavations in the former monastery of Harsefeld, Nösler pointed to a strange boulder next to the skull. The large boulder crushed the skull of the deceased individual. As it appears, the boulder was unlikely to have rolled into the grave. It took the efforts of two strong men to remove the boulder from the remains.

"The soil at this cemetery looks like it has been sifted, there are not even small pebbles and gravel there," the archaeologist from Stade said in an interview with spiegel.de. The man also said that the soil in the area was of a slightly different shade than the ground found inside the grave. The boulder could not find itself in the grave incidentally. The grave had been unearthed after the dead had been staying there for a while.

Indeed, the undead is common in the folklore of Northern Germany. For example, there is a tale about a poor woman from Brake, who promised another woman to take care of her burial for 15 thalers. When the woman died, the other woman used the payment for her own needs, contrary to her promise.

The dead woman would then come to look for her money every night. In the end, the woman was declared outlawed, and the dead calmed down. This is a usual end for such stories,

although, unfortunately, there are no details provided on to how the undead would be declared outlawed.

After Nosler told his colleagues about the story of the grave in Harsefeld, Dietrich Alsdorf recalled another curious burial that had been previously found in the area. Thirty-two years ago, in the western part of the cloister of Harsefeld monastery, a coffin was unearthed. The coffin had been buried in an unusual manner, with its lid down, the researcher said.

In addition, there were bricks found on the tomb, whereas the coffin had been buried deeper than usual. Someone definitely wanted to bury that dead person for sure, the researcher believes.

The two mysterious graves of the "living dead" are dated back to the XIV or XV century. "It was a time of large-scale epidemics, - explains Nosler. - If one died, he or she would often be followed by other family members. It was a widespread belief that the dead would grab the living and drag them into the nether world."

In medieval German legends, there were other types of undead creatures described - the so-called Nachzehrer (derived from a verb meaning extinction, loss, depletion or exhaustion of man). Those creatures were like vampires, but they were somewhat different.

If a piece of shroud would inadvertently find itself near the dead person's mouth, the dead would suck on it to obtain vitality and suck the lifeblood out from all those who had touched the piece of cloth before.

In the village of Oldendorf, located in the lower Elbe, Nosler and his colleagues found a Nachzehrer. In the burial from the XI or the XII century, an upper arm bone was resting across the neck of the dead. The bone, the researchers believe, was supposed not to let the shroud touch the dead person's mouth.

"Now we know that in these places, people did believe in the undead, and we will seek for more evidence," the researchers said.

Igor Bukker
Pravda.Ru

[Read the original in Russian](#)

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3. Everything / History & Politics / Historical Events

The London Beer Flood of 1814

The shout, or placard, of 'Free Beer' is often a hook to get people interested in something, but never did the two-word expression have more of a ring of truth to it than on Monday 17 October, 1814 - the day of the London Beer Flood.

Meux Beer

Meux's Brewery Co Ltd, established in 1764, was a London brewery owned by Sir Henry Meux¹. Meux, like many modern brewers, bought out smaller breweries - one such being the Horse Shoe Brewery² (founded by a Mr Blackburn, and famous for its 'black beer'), located on the junction of Tottenham Court Road and Oxford Street, London. Atop the Horse Shoe stood several large vats of beer. The largest was the porter vat - a 22-foot-high monstrosity that held 511,920 litres of beer, in turn held together by a total of 29 large iron hoops. For some idea of its vastness, *The Times* report of 1 April, 1785 read:

There is a cask now building at Messrs. Meux & Co.'s brewery...the size of which exceeds all credibility, being designed to hold 20,000 barrels of porter; the whole expense attending the same will be upwards of £ 10,000.

Tottenham Court Road Awash

Come October of 1814, the beer had been fermenting atop the brewery for months (as was the need with porter), and the metal and wood of this huge vat was, unbeknownst to the majority of the brewery workers³, beginning to show the strain of holding back the thousands of litres. Suddenly, at about 6.00pm, one of the heavy metal hoops snapped and the contents of the porter vat exploded out - quite literally - causing a chain reaction with the surrounding vats. The resulting noise was apparently heard as far away as five miles!

A total of 1,224,000 litres of beer under pressure smashed through the twenty-five foot high brick wall of the building, and gushed out into the surrounding area - the slum of St Giles. Many people lived in crowded conditions here, and some were caught by the waves of beer completely unaware. The torrent flooded through houses, demolishing two in its wake, and the nearby Tavistock Arms pub in Great Russell Street suffered too, its 14-year-old barmaid Eleanor Cooper buried under the rubble. *The Times* reported on 19 October of the flood:

The bursting of the brew-house walls, and the fall of heavy timber, materially contributed to aggravate the mischief, by forcing the roofs and walls of the adjoining houses.

Fearful that all the beer should go to waste, though, hundreds of people ran outside carrying pots, pans, and kettles to scoop it up - while some simply stooped low and lapped at the

liquid washing through the streets. However, the tide was too strong for many, and as injured people began arriving at the nearby Middlesex Hospital there was almost a riot as other patients demanded to know why they weren't being supplied with beer too - they could smell it on the flood survivors, and were insistent that they were missing out on a party! Calm was quickly restored at the hospital, but out in the streets was a different matter.

Drowning Their Sorrows

Back at the brewery, one man managed to save his brother from going under the vast wave, but as the tide receded the true damage could be discovered. The beer *tsunami* left nine people dead⁴; many had drowned (like Mary Mulvey and her 3-year-old son Thomas), others were swept away in the flood and died of the injuries they sustained (two young children: Hannah Banfield, 4, and Sarah Bates, 3), and the final victim actually succumbed some days later of alcohol poisoning - such was his heroic attempt to stem the tide by drinking as much beer as he humanly could.⁵

Because of the poverty of the area, relatives of the drowned took to exhibiting their families' corpses in their homes and charging a fee for viewing. In one house, though, too many people crowded in and the floor gave out, plunging them all into a cellar half full of beer. This morbid exhibition moved locations, attracting more custom - and eventually the police, who closed the doors on the horrible circus. Later, the funerals of the dead were paid for by the St Giles population, coins left on their coffins. The stench of the beer apparently lasted for months, and after the initial excitement, many found both their homes and livelihoods swept away with the flood. In amongst the misery of clearing away the dead and cleaning up the streets, though, there was compassion. *The Times* concluded:

The emotion and humanity with which the labourers proceeded in their distressing task excited a strong interest, and deserves warm approbation.

The Meux Brewery Company was taken to court over the accident, but the judge ruled that although devastating, the flood was an 'Act of God' and the deaths⁶ were simply by 'casualty'. In other words, no party was to blame, and the company continued working despite the incident. Up until 1961 that is, when it was sold to Friary, Holroyd and Healy's Brewery Ltd of Guildford. The firm became Friary Meux Ltd for only three years, before being bought outright by Ind Coope (& Allsop) of Burton-on-Trent.

Like Swimming in Treacle?

The London Beer Flood isn't the only strange flood to occur, mind you (apart from the biblical kinds). On 15 January, 1919, a huge tank of molasses collapsed in Boston, Massachusetts, causing a gigantic wave of the black, sticky liquid to rush through the city - leaving trains and houses in its wake. 21 people died in the disaster, and it took months to clean up the mess.

So, be careful when you dream of free beer (or molasses), you never know in what form it might appear!

¹ Conservative MP for Hertfordshire in the years 1847 - 1859.

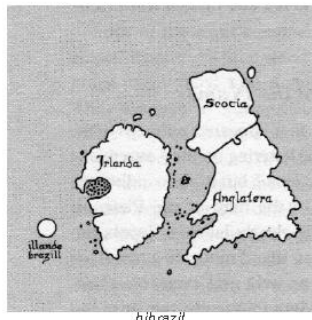
- 2 The horseshoe eventually became part of the Meux Brewery logo.
- 3 Storehouse clerk George Crick had noticed a small crack in one of the hoops and let the vat builder Mr Young know, but he felt that since it weighed 500lbs, and was a companion to 28 others, it would be fine.
- 4 Including Eleanor Cooper who had suffocated under the rubble of the Tavistock Arms.
- 5 This, however, may be an urban myth perpetuated by the penny dreadfuls of the time.
- 6 Those already mentioned, but also Ann Saville, 60, Elizabeth Smith, 27 and Catherine Butler, 63.

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In 1480 a fully-laden ship left the port of Bristol, England to sail west in search of the island of Hi-Brazil, which was believed to be somewhere off the coast of Ireland. It met with no success. Nor did the two ships which sailed the following year in search of the island fare any better. And the five ships captained by John Cabot which set sail in 1498 to search for Hi-Brazil came up equally empty-handed.

There was one very good reason why none of these ships could find Hi-Brazil: the island didn't exist, outside of legend.

Stories about the island had circulated around Europe for centuries, telling that it was the Promised Land of the Saints, an earthly paradise where fairies and magicians lived. But supposedly the island was surrounded by thick fog, hidden from the eyes of mortals.



Apparently quite a few people thought there might be something to these legends. Cartographers, in particular, were confident enough in the existence of the island to start putting it on maps in the mid 1300s. And its existence as a point on maps appears to have inspired all those ill-fated voyages during the late 1400s to find it.

We might forgive those European explorers who put their faith in a legend and went off searching for a phantom island. After all, often times there is some hidden truth behind legends. But we must raise a skeptical eyebrow when we encounter the tale of Captain John Nisbet, who set sail from France in September 1674 intending to return home to Ireland, but who claimed that enroute he accidentally found the fabled island of Hi-Brazil.

According to Nisbet's later description, his crew chanced upon the island after sailing through an especially thick cloud of fog. They disembarked on the island and discovered that it was inhabited by large black rabbits and a magician who lived alone in a castle. The magician informed them that the spell that had kept the island hidden

from the eyes of mortals had been broken.

This was great news, and other people, upon hearing it, wasted no time in attempting to profit from it. In 1675 a man named Mathew Calhoon used Nisbet's account to file a request with King Charles I for a patent of ownership to the island of Hi-Brazil. It's not clear what the basis of his claim to the island was since, by his own admission, it was Nisbet who had found the island, not himself. Apparently he felt that the island should rightfully be his since he had read Nisbet's account. Unfortunately King Charles's reply to Calhoon is not recorded, but whether or not Calhoon ever received his patent is quite irrelevant, since the island was never found again. Evidently the spell had not been broken.

- Johnson, Donald S. (1994). *Phantom Islands of the Atlantic: The Legends of Seven Lands That Never Were*. Walker and Company, New York.
- Adams, Percy G. (1962). *Travelers and Travel Liars: 1660-1800*. (Reprinted in 1980 by Dover Publications.)

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That's why they called the country of Brasil, Brazil. Cartographers thought that Hy-Braesal/Hi Brazil must be the South American east coast and was therefore the same place. It was also believed that the Fountain of Youth was on Hy Brasel as well.

Posted by Paul Schmidt in New Zealand on Tue Jan 31, 2012 at 08:50 AM

A good example of sea level changes in this area of the world can be found in relation to the Isles of Scilly. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isles_of_Scilly

These islands were as recently as the roman period described as a single island and several sets of field walls have been discovered in the surrounding shallows.

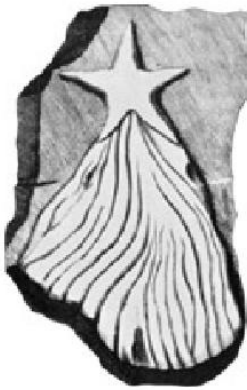
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Recent work with inundating mapping points to the last great sea rise in world to have occurred between 300 and 600 AD depending on local conditions. This then brings alive the prospect that some of these island myths might actually have a grain of truth in them remembered from the days of oral tradition.

<http://www.geosociety.org/gsatoday/archive/19/9/article/i1052-5173-19-9-52.htm>

Posted by Aaron in Australia on Wed Dec 11, 2013 at 12:12 AM

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An engraving of a stone bearing the image of an astronomical object, from *Lithographiae Wirceburgensis*.

Dr. Johann Bartholomew Adam Beringer (1667-1740) was a Senior Professor and Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Würzburg in Germany. Like many physicians of the time, he cultivated an interest in natural history. In particular, he was intrigued by what was called the study of oryctics, or "things dug from the earth." Today we would call this the study of fossils, or paleontology.

Beringer kept a collection of interesting fossils he had acquired over the years. Until 1725 his collection was quite ordinary, but then, on May 31, 1725, some remarkable new pieces came into his possession. They were delivered to him by three local boys he had paid to explore nearby Mount Eivelstadt and bring him any interesting objects they might find.

What the boys brought him were three stones that displayed, on their surfaces, images in sharp, three-dimensional relief. One stone bore a stylized image of the sun. The other two bore images of worms.

Dr. Beringer was genuinely puzzled by the stones, and he grew even more puzzled as, over the course of the subsequent months, the boys continued to bring him more of these curiosities. By November they had brought him almost two thousand stones bearing the images of plants, insects, birds, snails, astronomical objects, and even Hebrew letters.

Beringer decided he should write a treatise about the stones, in order to bring them to the attention of other scholars. He published this treatise, titled *Lithographiae Wirceburgensis*, in early 1726.

Stones displaying hebrew letters

Beringer devoted the bulk of his book to presenting different theories about what the stones



might be. He considered whether they were relics of the Great Flood, or whether they were the product of "the marvelous force of petrifying moisture." He even wondered whether they were the work of man. For instance, could the stones "be ascribed to the superstitious art of the heathen Germans"? Or were the stones of more recent origin? In Chapter XII, Beringer considered whether the stones might be a modern fraud.

Ultimately Beringer rejected the idea that the stones were man-made. He felt that there were simply too many of the stones for a modern hoaxer to have produced them all. Nor could he imagine why anyone would want to expend so much energy to pull off such an elaborate hoax. He concluded that the stones had to be the work of nature,

though he didn't know what natural process had created them. He left that question to his fellow scholars to debate.

According to legend, just as the first copies of his book were rolling off the printing press, the boys presented Beringer with a final stone, one which had his own name carved in it. Finally, he realized that he had indeed been the victim of an elaborate hoax. Humiliated, and in a state of panic, Beringer frantically tried to buy up all the existing copies of his book. Extant copies of the book are now extremely rare and can fetch over \$10,000.

The Hoaxers

As Chapter XII of the *Lithographiae Wirceburgensis* demonstrates, Beringer was well aware of the possibility of a hoax before he decided to go to press. He wrote in that chapter:

With peaceful mind and tranquil pen I pursued the dissertation which I had begun on this controversy. Then, when I had all but completed my work, I caught the rumor circulating throughout the city, especially among prominent and learned men, that every one of these stones, which, on the advice of wise men, I proposed to expound in a published treatise, were "recently sculpted by hand, made to look as though at different periods they had been resurrected from a very old burial, and sold to me as to one indifferent to fraud and caught up in the blind greed of curiosity; further, that I, once deceived, in my wretched turn, was deluding the world, and trying to sell new hoaxes as genuine antiques, to the silent laughter of prudent souls." I was shocked beyond words to learn that the authors of this atrocious calumny were two men, perhaps best described as a pair of antagonists, whose names I have reason to protect at present -- men with whom I was closely associated in numerous functions, former colleagues in the Academic Society.

Despite the possibility of a hoax, Beringer pressed ahead. Evidently he had poured so much effort into the study of the stones that he couldn't bear the thought that all his work had been in vain. Instead, he convinced himself that, despite the rumor, the stones were real. He suggested that his two colleagues might be spreading a false rumor of a hoax in order to

undermine his work.

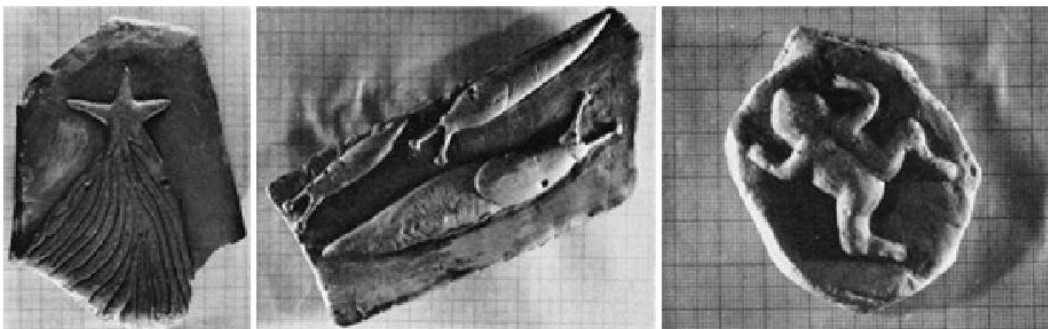
But evidently, shortly after the publication of the book, something did happen to convince Beringer that all the stones were fake. Perhaps it was, as the legend suggests, the occasion of being presented with a stone bearing his own name. Melvin Jahn and Daniel Woolf have suggested that the local Bishop of the Church might have made the situation clear to Beringer.

Once convinced of the hoax, Beringer decided to bring criminal charges against the two men he suspected of the deceit. These two men were J. Ignatz Roderick, Professor of Geography, Algebra, and Analysis at the University of Würzburg, and Georg von Eckhart, Privy Councillor and Librarian to the Court and the University.

The case came to court on April 13, 1726, and Beringer won a conviction against the men. The transcript of this case, discovered in the Würzburg State Archives in 1935 by Dr. Heinrich Kirchner, is the main source of information we have about the hoax.

Unfortunately, the transcript does not shed much light on the motivation of the hoaxers. We simply learn that they hated Beringer because "he was so arrogant and despised them all."

The Aftermath



A sample of some of the "lying stones" still extant.

In the short run, Beringer emerged from the incident in better shape than his hoaxers. Despite later rumors that he was so mortified by the hoax that he died soon thereafter, he actually lived on for fourteen more years and wrote two more books.

By contrast, von Eckhart died four years after the trial. Roderick was forced to leave Würzburg, with a cloud of dishonor permanently hanging over him.

However, history was not kind to Dr. Beringer. The story of the Doctor and the "Lying Stones" ("Lügensteine" as German authors called them) soon spread, and the Doctor's name became a byword for credulity. The popular version of the story that circulated during the subsequent two centuries falsely alleged that Beringer had fallen for a simple student prank, rather than for an elaborate scheme concocted by jealous colleagues. In academic circles, Beringer's story served as a cautionary tale about the danger of wantonly pursuing unsupported hypotheses.

A second edition of the *Lithographiae Wirceburgensis* was published in 1767, twenty-seven years after Beringer's death. It is not clear why the book was republished at this time. In 1963 Melvin Jahn and Daniel Woolf published an English translation of Beringer's book.

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The Man-Eater of Lucknow

A Story from *The Private Life of an Eastern King*

by William Knighton (1834-1900)

I was driving in a buggy one morning through one of the finest streets of Lucknow. A friend accompanied me; and we were proceeding from the vicinity of the Goomty to one of the King's palaces. The deserted condition of the streets as we advanced surprised us. There was no inhabitant to be seen for a considerable distance, and where one was visible, he or she was hurriedly departing from the broad line of road on which I drove. So many strange things occur in a city exposed to the capricious tyranny of a man without any restraining principle, that we felt by no means that astonishment which anyone fresh from England would have felt under the circumstances. Some execution, we whispered to each other, some fresh example - nothing more.

At length, in the middle of the road, we came upon a trampled bloody mass, bearing still some resemblance to a human figure. We stopped the buggy to inspect it. It was the corpse of a poor native female; but terribly disfigured. The body was bruised and lacerated in all directions, the scanty drapery torn from the form; the face had been crushed as if by teeth into a shapeless mass; the long matted hair, which fell in bundles over the road, was all clotted with blood. It was altogether as disgusting a sight as one could well see anywhere. Apparently she was quite dead; and we did not delay.

On we went; still no sign of inhabitants - the houses everywhere closed - breathless terror reigning on all sides. It was not long before we came upon the figure of a youth, similarly mangled and destroyed, lying in the road, more towards the side, however. On the top of an adjoining house we saw one of the king's troopers standing, looking intently up the road along which we were advancing.

'What is the matter?' I asked.

'The man-eater is loose,' was the reply; 'wallah, but he has turned again. Look out for

your safety, sahibs; he is wild today.'

I had heard of a savage horse belonging to one of the king's troopers that went by this name – *admee-kanawallah*, the man-eater; because he had been the destruction of many men.

'He is coming, sahibs,' shouted the trooper from the house-top; 'take care, take care.'

Far along the road in front of us we could see the wild brute – a large bay entire horse he was, as we afterwards found – shaking a child whom he had seized as he held it in his mouth, shaking it savagely, but evidently coming towards us.

In another moment he had seen the vehicle, threw the child upon the road, dead no doubt, and rushed forward with savage fury to attack us. There was still a considerable space to be passed by him, but not a moment was to be lost. We turned rapidly round, our horse almost unmanageable from terror, flying over the ground; and away we went in a mad gallop down towards an enclosure with iron gates that we had passed a short time before. The man-eater pursued with hearty goodwill. We could hear his iron hooves clattering over the road as he advanced.

We gained the enclosure – turned into it – my companion leaped from the buggy, and shut the gate. The whole was the action of a moment. It fortunately shut with a heavy bolt which fell into a socket; and just as the fall of the bolt secured our safety, the man-eater came tramping up. His head was covered with blood, his jaws steaming with recent slaughter, his cheeks horrid with coagulated guts that had most probably spurted from his victims. There he stood, looking savagely after us through the iron railings, with cocked ears, distended nostrils and glaring eye-balls, a ferocious-looking monster! Our horse trembled at the sound of his impatient snorting – trembled as if shivering with cold! The man-eater glared at us through the iron bars, and walked round to the side; but all was hard iron railings, substantial too. There was no entrance to be got. Satisfied that he was baffled, at length he turned round, rattled his iron heels against the bars, and then scampered with head and tail erect and cocked ears, down the road, towards an archway which was built over it. Here several troopers were waiting for him. A noose was thrown skilfully over the uplifted head. He was upset, muzzled, and conducted to his stable. The poor woman and youth and child? you ask. I heard nothing more of them. Doubtless their friends bore them off and buried them.

At dinner that day I took the liberty of mentioning the circumstances to his majesty.

'I have often heard of that man-eater,' said he; 'he must be a furious beast.'

'He is more savage than a tiger, your majesty.'

'A tiger – good – he shall fight a tiger. We shall see what impression Burrhea will make on him.'

Burrhea was the name of a favourite tiger of the king's, so called from a village at the

foot of the Himalayas, near which he had been taken. The king would never allow him to fight with other tigers or with elephants; he was a pet, and was only allowed to enter into contests with such animals as he could easily vanquish.

It was on the following day, in the morning, before lunch, we were all assembled at Chaun-gunge in the gallery of a court-yard, about sixty yards square in extent – a court-yard with buildings all round, and a verandah below. Thick bamboo railings had been put up in front of the verandah, so as completely to encircle the court-yard, and to form a sort of enlarged cage. The man-eater had been enticed into the enclosure by means of a little mare – a tattoo, as the country horses are called – of trifling value.

The king and his usual suite of female attendants had taken their places in the gallery, he on a sofa placed there for the purpose, they behind him. We stood on his majesty's right and left, leaning on the parapet or on the sofa. Everyone commanded a full view of the court-yard, and the ladies seemed to relish the prospect as much as anyone.

The order was given, and Burrhea's cage was brought into the verandah. A door in the bamboo railings, prepared for the purpose, was drawn up, the cage-door was opened, and Burrhea bounded into the court-yard, lashing his sides with his long tail, and glaring furiously upon the man-eater and his little female friend. A more beautiful tiger than Burrhea it would not be easy to discover in all India. His glossy coat, regularly streaked, shone in the enclosure, in pleasant contrast with the frowsy covering of the little mare. Even the well-kept hide of the man-eater was sadly wanting in brilliancy when compared with the glittering skin of Burrhea.

The tiger had been kept without food or drink from the previous day to prepare him for the assault. He glared savagely at the horses as he entered, and commenced slowly stealing along towards them. The man-eater kept his eyes fixed on the eye-balls of his enemy. Not for an instant did he take them off; his head lowered, standing in an uneasy attitude with one foot slightly advanced, he awaited the attack, moving as Burrhea moved, but always with the eyes intently fixed. As for the poor little mare, she was transfixed with fear – paralysed – apparently unable to take a thought for preservation. She stood cowering in a corner, awaiting her fate. With a slight bound Burrhea was upon the mare in an instant. A blow of his paw threw her over on the ground; his teeth were fastened in her neck, and he drank her blood greedily. It was simple butchery; for there was no resistance.

'It will make Burrhea only the more savage,' said the king, rubbing his hands gleefully. The European courtiers assented; and the female attendants, ignorant of the language, but certain that the king was pleased, were mightily pleased too. They exchanged glances of approbation and of satisfaction and they turned again to watch the proceedings in the court-yard.

Burrhea might have been three to five minutes enjoying his draught of blood – not more – his head turned towards the man-eater all the time, and his eyes for the most part fixed on him. The man-eater, on his side, gave no indication of uneasiness. An impatient snort or two escaped him; that was all. With protruded neck and cocked ear,

and glaring eye-balls, and twitching tail, he watched his enemy intently, still standing in an easy attitude of attention, as if prepared for immediate action.

At length, Burrhea was satisfied, or else no more blood was forthcoming; and taking his claws out of the dead animal, and shaking himself as he did so, he began to go stealthily round the court-yard, like a cat stealing a march on a rat. He made no noise whatever. The large paws were placed one after the other upon the ground, the soft ball of the foot preventing any sound. Slowly they were raised and depressed; whilst the long back as slowly made its way forwards, now raised at the shoulders, now at the hindquarters, as the legs were moved – the skin glancing backwards and forwards as if hardly belonging to the bones and muscles beneath it. It was not a scene to be forgotten; the king and his attendant females gazing intently above, the European courtiers straining with eyes and ears to catch every movement and every sound; the man-eater in the centre of the court-yard slowly turning as the tiger turned his head, head, ears and neck ever the same; the tiger stealing along, so cat-like in aspect, and yet so gigantic in strength. Not a sound was audible but the grating of the man-eater's feet as they were raised and lowered again – not another sound; but all was mute expectation and anxious gazing.

At length the tiger bounded with the rapidity of lightning upon his enemy; the horse was fully prepared. It had evidently been Burrhea's intention to seize the head and fore-quarters; but the man-eater was too adroit for that; and, by a quick diving motion of his head and shoulders, had received his antagonist upon his muscular haunches behind. The claws sank deeply into the flesh, whilst the hind feet of the tiger made a grasp or two at the forelegs of the horse; but there was no time to secure his position. The man-eater lashed up with his iron heels into the air with tremendous vigour, and in a moment Burrhea was sprawling on the ground, not at all the better for his attack. We could hardly perceive, however, that he had been thrown upon his back – partly against the bamboo railing, partly on the ground – when he was on his legs again, gyrating as before, moving stealthily round as if nothing had happened. With an indignant snort the man-eater resumed his former position, and awaited another spring, his muscular haunches bearing evidence in their lacerated skin, and in the gouts of blood which disfigured them, of the sharpness and strength of the tiger's claws.

'Burrhea will kill him yet!' exclaimed the king, turning to the nearest European.

'Undoubtedly, your majesty,' said the courtier.

Cat-like did Burrhea pace round and round again, his broad round head ever turned towards his wary antagonist. Each foot was lifted and lowered again in succession noiselessly as before, whilst the beautifully-streaked hide played over the bones and muscles freely. With distended nostrils and flashing eyes, the man-eater watched again as intently as ever, exactly in the same position as formerly – the head and neck lowered and protruded; the ears cocked rigidly; the eyes fixed in a glazed stare at the stealthily-gliding tiger; and one fore-foot ever slightly advanced to admit, doubtless, of

that rapid diving and thrusting forward of the shoulder and head, by which he had formerly succeeded in getting his antagonist upon his hind-quarters.

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For fully eight or ten minutes did this monotonous circling of Burrhea continue, the man-eater ever facing him and gazing intently, an angry snort now and then bursting from the horse as he turned. Burrhea opened his huge jaws widely at times, and licked up the drops of blood which still clung to them; and once (but once only) he paused for a moment over the dead mare, as if meditating a second draught. But the irresolution was only momentary, and the monotonous walk was continued.

At length the decisive moment arrived again. Burrhea was standing almost over the carcass of the dead mare, when he sprang once more, sprang so suddenly, that we in the gallery started at the sight, expecting it though we were; and more than one of the attendants on the king gave forth a stifled exclamation of alarm. There was no premonitory growl, or display of any kind. It was as if by galvanic agency the tiger had been suddenly lifted into the air in the course of his monotonous gyration.

Man-eater was not taken by surprise, however. His head was ducked still lower than before; his fore-quarters seemed to slide under the springing assailant; and again were Burrhea's claws dug deeply into his haunches; but further over on this occasion than on the former. The broad round head of the tiger projected for an instant beyond the tail of the horse, whilst his hind claws were stuck deeply into the man-eater's breast. For an instant we saw him quivering unsteadily in that position, crouching with his belly on the horse's back, clinging to his prey for an instant, but only for an instant. Again did the ferocious stallion lash up with his hind feet, almost as if he would throw himself over on his back. His iron heels came with crushing force against the jaw of Burrhea, and in a moment the tiger was sprawling helplessly upon the ground, once more stretched upon his back.

It was but for an instant, however, that Burrhea thus lay; but, when he resumed his feet, and began running round the bamboo enclosure, it was quite apparent that it was no longer to attack again, but to escape. His jaw was broken; and, with his tail between his legs, he cried out loudly with pain as he ran round, not unlike a whipped spaniel. The man-eater watched him, as before, intently, evidently fearful of a ruse, and finding it difficult to keep up with his rapid motion. But it was no ruse; Burrhea was looking eagerly for some method of escape, crying almost piteously as he did so. 'His jaw is broken', whispered by some of the male servants below, who watched him from the verandah. The sound reached our gallery, and the king heard it.

'Burrhea's jaw is broken!' he exclaimed to us; 'Shall we let him escape?'

'As your majesty pleases,' was our answer.

The signal was given – the door of the cage was opened, the bamboos opposite to it raised – and Burrhea rushed in to bury himself in the furthest corner.

Proudly did the man-eater snort and paw when he found himself thus victor. He first

scampered up to the mare, and snuffed there a moment; and then, spurning her with his foot, with head aloft and tail arched, he trotted to one point and another of the bamboo railing as if anxious to get at the attendant servants. His blood was up; and tigers or men, he did not mind which were his assailants now, or which he assailed.

'Let another tiger be set at him,' shouted the king to the natives, after he had watched him for a moment or two. 'Damn him; I will have my revenge for his destroying Burrhea;' the latter observation was addressed to us, the attendant Europeans, and was in English. We rubbed our hands, smiled, said it was most just, bowed, and awaited further sport.

'That was a terrible blow he struck with his hind legs,' said the king.

'It was a tremendous blow, your majesty. I heard it sounding on Burrhea's jaw-bone,' was the answer of one of our little company.

The keeper of the tigers here interposed. A message was brought to ask if he might venture into the presence of his majesty. 'Let him come,' was the kingly order.

The keeper of the tigers approached.

'May it please your majesty's greatness, but the tigers were all fed two hours ago,' said he, 'but the best we have, your majesty shall see in the court-yard in a moment.'

'And why were they fed two hours ago, you scoundrel?' asked the king.

'May it please the royal greatness of your majesty, but that was the ordinary time for feeding, and they are fed daily,' said the poor man, as he salaamed lowly, trembling in every limb.

'You shall go in to the man-eater yourself, you slave, if this tiger does not attack him.'

The tiger's cage was soon after in the verandah; and all eyes were turned eagerly towards it. The keeper of the tigers withdrew with no pleasant anticipations, be sure of it; for what the king said, he would think little of doing.

Wine, which had been ordered when Burrhea beat his retreat, was now brought; and the king pledged his guests in a brimming tumbler of iced claret. The drink was refreshing, because it was so cool; for the court-yard was oppressively hot, at least to us the Europeans of the party. As for the king, the attendant women fanned him, by gently waving around him the bushy fan formed of the peacock's tail. It was a pretty and graceful sight to see the finely-turned arms, naked to the shoulder, with a jewelled bracelet or two on the wrist and above the elbow, waving about as the fans moved upwards and downwards, or from side to side – the fair fanners taking care not to interrupt the king's view as they gracefully put the air in motion.

The tiger's cage was brought, and placed in the verandah opposite the portion of the bamboo railing, which could be raised at pleasure. A passage was made, and a tiger

came leisurely forth and surveyed the court-yard. He stood for a moment irresolute on the threshold, as if doubtful about advancing; but a spear's point, dexterously administered behind, left him doubtful no longer, and he scampered into the enclosure. The bamboo railing was let down; the door of the cage was shut again; and the tiger leisurely surveyed his intended antagonist. After gazing for a moment at the man-eater, who turned to face him, he went up to the dead mare, licked a drop or two of blood from the neck, and then gazed at the man-eater again, who stood as before, on the defensive.

This tiger was somewhat larger than Burrhea, but not so beautifully streaked. There was something, too, more light and graceful about every movement of Burrhea. In fact, this fellow was evidently quite a plebeian, with huge muscular development and shuffling gait. Perhaps, however, he only wanted the stimulus of hunger to make him as active and graceful as Burrhea had been.

The man-eater stood, as I have said, upon the defensive, at the side of the court-yard, opposite to that at which the tiger seemed to have a very incorrect idea of the reason why he was placed in his present position – he evidently did not understand what was expected of him; for squatting down upon the mare, keeping his face like a cautious soldier to his doubtful friend, the man-eater, he proceeded to tear up the dead animal leisurely, exhibiting a strength of claw, of limb, and of jaw, in doing so, that must have awakened uneasy sensations in the man-eater, if he reflected on his position at all.

'Remove that carcass,' shouted the king, annoyed; 'fools that you were to leave it there!'

The order was obeyed forthwith. An iron rod or two, heated to redness, drove the tiger away. A noose was passed over the neck of the dead mare, and in a moment it was hoisted out of the arena. The tiger, evidently annoyed at the way in which he had been disturbed in his repast, stretched himself at full length in the middle of the court-yard, licked his lips, and growled at the men in the verandah, looking now at them and now at the man-eater, who still stood prepared for the contest as before.

It was not easy to reach the tiger where he lay. A few ineffectual efforts were made to rouse him with hot rods; but they were too short. At length, a spear of portentous dimensions was introduced, and he was struck with it. He bounded to his feet, seized the spear, ran along its length to the bamboo barrier, and there tugged valorously at one of the bamboo railings. This was too dangerous a sport to allow him to indulge in, and he was soon dislodged, and sent howling away with the hot irons. He scampered once or twice round the enclosure, the man-eater eyeing him intently all the while, and facing him still as he turned in every direction. All the efforts of the attendants were unsuccessful, however, in getting him to assail the horse. He was burnt, and speared, and enraged; but vented his rage on the bamboos, and showed his glittering teeth to the men; nothing could induce him, apparently, to attack the man-eater, whilst, on his part, man-eater seemed to have no disposition at all to attack him.

It was an evident palpable failure, and I began to dread that the poor keeper of the

tigers would certainly be introduced into the court-yard; but the king had forgotten all about his threat, and shouted out that man-eater was a brave fellow, that they should remove the tiger, and see what the horse could do with three wild buffaloes.

There is, perhaps, no animal so fierce and terrible as the wild buffalo, when thoroughly aroused – heavy, clumsy, and awkward though he be. I have frequently seen him put a good-sized elephant to flight, goring the fugitive terribly. The cage-door was opened, the bamboos were lifted, and the tiger bounded into his den with infinitely more alacrity than he had shown in getting out of it. There was a pause of a few minutes – the wine circulated in the gallery again – and three uncouth-looking unwieldy buffaloes were driven into the enclosure, one by one.

With that peculiarly stupid gaze of theirs, their huge heads moving unmeaningly from side to side, they pushed their way on into the middle of the court-yard.

The man-eater retreated as they advanced. Their huge forms disconcerted him not a little. Even the appearance of the second tiger, after his deadly encounter with the first, had moved him less than the apparition of these uncouth monsters, with their broad flat foreheads, their wide branching horns, and the ample black rotundities of their figures. He retreated step by step, snorting as he did so, but more with apprehension than with anger. Like all bullies, he would have rushed headlong at them had he seen any signs of fear; but their evident want of terror of him was plainly the cause of his embarrassment.

Huddled confusedly together, the three black brutes thrust their heads to one side and the other in idiotic gaze; now snuffing vainly at the ground, now watching the attendants in the verandah, now contemplating the pillars of the gallery, and anon inspecting the redoubted man-eater, as if vainly asking by their gaze what possible good could be gained by having him there. As to attacking the horse, the idea evidently never entered their heads. He, however, took courage as he saw them irresolute and uncertain. Pawing the ground first, then snuffing at them with distended nostrils, then advancing a step, then snorting with doubt, he slowly came nearer, step by step, almost inch by inch – they, on their part, paying no heed to his movements, but still crowding together, and tossing their heads about in an eminently asinine way.

Step by step, I say, did the man-eater advance. At length his head almost touched the protruding side of the nearest buffalo. He snorted and sniffed, and smelt vigorously as he stretched out his long neck towards the unwieldy brute; the buffalo, for his part, heeding him but a little, or not at all. Familiarity breeds contempt, says the old proverb, and certainly it did so in this instance; for, after snorting and sniffing, and smelling at his ease, advancing while a step or two nearer, man-eater wheeled suddenly round, lashed out furiously behind, and rattled his iron hoofs in gallant style against the ribs of the meditating buffalo. The attack was so sudden, so utterly unlooked for, and so violent withal, that the buffalo was stunned for a moment; his companions shaking their heads in chorus, as if opining that there was something in that.

The king laughed outrageously as he gazed at their confusion. 'The man-eater

deserves his life,' he shouted out; 'let him escape.' The order was obeyed forthwith, he was adroitly muzzled and led forth to his stable, a victor and a conqueror, to end his days in peaceful glory.

'I shall have an iron cage made for him,' exclaimed the king; 'and he shall be taken care of. By my father's head but he is a brave fellow.'

He had an iron cage made for him, one twice the size of many modern London dining-rooms; and there, roaming round the walls of his iron house, man-eater exhibited his teeth to admiring visitors, snapped at them valorously, and often showed how he assaulted the ribs of the buffalo, by playing the same tune on the bars of his cage.

When I left Lucknow, the man-eater was still one of its sights.

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On April 28, 1874, the *New York World* ran an article announcing the discovery in Madagascar of a remarkable new species of plant: a man-eating tree. The article included a gruesome description of a woman fed to the plant by members of the Mkodos tribe. Numerous newspapers and magazines reprinted the article, but 14 years later the journal *Current Literature* revealed the story to be a work of fiction written by *NY World* reporter Edmund Spencer.



Depiction of the man-eating tree,
from the front cover of *Madagascar: Land of the Man-Eating Tree*

But despite having been debunked, the story of the man-eating tree refused to die. In fact, it became one of the most enduring hoaxes of the 19th Century, continuing to circulate as fact for decades afterwards. During the 20th Century, several explorers even searched for the man-eating tree in Madagascar. Meanwhile, the identity of the author of the story was

completely forgotten and was only recovered when the *Current Literature* journal was scanned and made available online during the 21st Century.

The Story

The *NY World* claimed to have obtained its information about the man-eating tree from "the last number of Graefe and Walther's *Magazine*, published at Carlsruhe," in which there was a letter from the discoverer, the "eminent botanist" Karl Leche, to a colleague, Dr. Omelius Friedlowsky. Most of the *NY World* article consisted of the text of Leche's letter.

The beginning of the *NY World* article

CRINOIDA DAJEEANA.

The Man-eating Tree of Madagascar.

In the last number of Graefe and Walther's *Magazine*, published at Carlsruhe, there is a letter in regard to the newly-discovered *Crinoida Dajeeana*, from the discoverer, Karl Leche, the eminent botanist, prefaced by some notes from Dr. Omelius Friedlowsky, whose deep research in vegetable physiology has had so many important results. Leche's letter, it appears, was originally addressed to Friedlowsky, and they seem to have been pursuing together for some time a subject of novel and startling interest, which is likely to give some remarkable discoveries to science.

In the letter, Leche described how while traveling through Madagascar he came into a region of the country occupied by the Mkodos, "a tribe of inhospitable savages of whom little was known."

As Leche and his party walked along, they noticed that members of the Mkodos tribe were silently emerging from the jungle and following behind them. They came to a spot where a stream wound through the forest, and here they encountered "the most singular of trees." Leche provided a detailed

description of it:

If you can imagine a pineapple eight feet high and thick in proportion resting upon its base and denuded of leaves, you will have a good idea of the trunk of the tree, which, however, was not the color of an anana, but a dark, dingy brown, and apparently hard as iron. From the apex of this truncated cone (at least two feet in diameter) eight leaves hung sheer to the ground, like doors swung back on their hinges. These leaves, which were joined to the top of the tree at regular intervals, were about eleven or twelve feet long and shaped very much like the leaves of the American aguave, or century plant. They were two feet through in their thickest part and three feet wide, tapering to a sharp point that looked like a cow's horn, very convex on the outer (but now under) surface, and on the inner (now upper) surface slightly concave. This concave face was thickly set with very strong thorny hooks, like those upon the head of the teasle. These leaves, hanging thus limp and lifeless, dead green in color, had in appearance the massive strength of oak fibre.

The apex of the cone was a round, white, concave figure, like a smaller plate set within a larger one. This was not a flower but a receptacle, and there exuded into it a clear, treacly liquid, honeysweet, and possessed of violent intoxicating and soporific properties. From underneath the rim (so to speak) of the undermost plate a series of long, hairy green tendrils stretched out in every direction towards the horizon. These were seven or eight feet long each, and tapered from four inches to a half an inch in diameter, yet they stretched out stiffly as iron rods. Above these (from between the upper and under cup) six white, almost transparent palpi reared themselves towards the sky, twirling and twisting with a marvelous incessant motion, yet constantly reaching upwards. Thin as reeds, and frail as quills apparently, they were yet five or six feet tall, and were so constantly and vigorously in motion, with such a subtle, sinuous, silent throbbing against the air, that they made me shudder in spite of myself with their suggestion of serpent flayed, yet dancing on their tails.

The Mkodos, when they saw the tree, began shouting, "Tepe! Tepe!" Then they surrounded one of their women and forced her, at javelin point, to climb the tree until she reached the apex of the cone that contained the treacly fluid. "Tsik! tsik!" the Mkodos men cried, which meant "drink! drink!"

Obediently, she drank, and then, almost instantly, the slender palpi of the tree came alive, quivered, and seized her around her neck and arms. She screamed, but the tendrils gripped her tighter, strangling her, until her cries became a gurgled moan. The contraction of the tendrils caused the fluid of the tree to stream down its trunk, mingling with the "blood and oozing viscera of the victim."

The Mkodos rushed forward to drink this mixture of blood and tree fluid. Then ensued "a grotesque and indescribably hideous orgie."

Leche concluded his letter by explaining that he studied the carnivorous tree for three more weeks, during which time he found several other, smaller specimens of it in the forest. He saw one of the trees eat a lemur.

He named the species *Crinoida Dajeeana*, because "when its leaves are in action it bears a striking resemblance to that well-known fossil the crinoid lily stone, or St. Cuthbert's beads." *Dajeeana* referred to Dr. Bhawoo Dajee, a "liberal-minded, intelligent Parsee physician of Bombay."



An ancient map of Madagascar, from *Madagascar: Land of the Man-Eating Tree*

What Was True, What Was False



Karl Ferdinand von Graefe

Almost every detail in the story was fictitious. None of the people who were mentioned in it existed — not Karl Leche, Dr. Omelius Friedlowsky, or Dr. Bhawoo Dajee. Nor were the Mkodos a real tribe. The tree itself, most significantly, was pure fantasy — a gothic horror of the colonial era.

However, the source to which the story was credited — "Graefe and Walther's *Magazine*, published at Carlsruhe" — was a real publication. Or, at least, there was a scientific journal founded by two prestigious German surgeons, Karl Ferdinand von Graefe and Philipp Franz von Walther, titled *Journal der Chirurgie und Augenheilkunde* (The Surgical and Ophthalmic Journal).

However, this journal was published in Berlin, not Carlsruhe. Also, it began publication in 1820 and ended in 1850, following the death of Walther. So by 1874, there hadn't been a new issue of the journal for 24 years. In other words, this journal was NOT the original source of the man-eating tree story.

Initial Reception and Exposure

Upon its publication, the man-eating tree story immediately attracted attention, and many other newspapers reprinted it for the benefit of their readers. The June 1874 issue of *The Garden* magazine noted, "There is a harrowing description of a man-eating plant going the rounds of the papers."

Unlike most media hoaxes of the 19th Century, which attracted attention for a few weeks and then were forgotten, interest in the man-eating tree endured. Several years later, reprints of the story were still appearing in magazines such as *Frank Leslie's Pleasant Hours* and *The Farmer's Magazine*.

There were notes of skepticism. For instance, in February 1875 the *Christian Union* noted, "The World published a very clever hoax about the 'Man-Eating Tree of Madagascar.' No doubt many a credulous reader was taken in thereby."

But it wasn't until 1888 that the story was fully exposed as a hoax, and its author identified. In 1888, Frederick Maxwell Somers had launched a new magazine, *Current Literature*, and in the second issue he reprinted the story of the man-eating tree and provided information about its origin:

It was written years ago by Mr. Edmund Spencer for the N.Y. World. While Mr. Spencer was connected with that paper he wrote a number of stories, all being remarkable for their appearance of truth, the extraordinary imagination displayed, and for their somber tone. Mr. Spencer was a master of the horrible, some of his stories approaching closely to those of Poe in this regard. Like many clever men his best work is hidden in the files of the daily press. This particular story of the Crinoida Dajeeana, the Devil Tree of Madagascar, was copied far and wide, and caused many a hunt for the words of Dr. Friedlowsky. It was written as the result of a talk with some friends, during which Mr. Spencer maintained that all that was necessary to produce a sensation of horror in the reader was to greatly exaggerate some well-known and perhaps beautiful thing. He then stated that he would show what could be done with the sensitive plant when this method of treatment was applied to it. The devil-tree is, after all, only a monstrous variety of the 'Venus fly trap' so common in North Carolina. Mr. Spencer died about two years ago in Baltimore, Md.

No other record has ever been found of the existence of Mr. Edmund Spencer of the N.Y. World. However, Somers was highly knowledgeable about the New York literary scene, so there's no reason his information shouldn't be accepted as credible.

However, Somers' revelation went entirely unnoticed. Throughout the 1890s, the man-eating tree story continued to appear in magazines, but none mentioned that Spencer was the author. By the 20th Century, the NY World wasn't even being identified as the original publisher of the tale. This caused enormous confusion to researchers throughout the 20th Century who came across the story and tried to track down its source.

It wasn't until the 21st Century, when issues of *Current Literature* became searchable via Google Books, that Somers' information about the identity of the hoax's author reemerged.

In Search of the Man-Eating Tree

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a number of explorers searched for the man-eating tree in Madagascar, not realizing that the story was a NY World hoax.

Frank Vincent: The first man-eating-tree searcher was the American travel writer Frank Vincent, author of *Actual Africa*. He traveled throughout Madagascar during the early 1890s, and while he wasn't there specifically to search for the man-eating tree, he later told reporters that he did ask around about it "for his own personal satisfaction". However, he couldn't find it and concluded that accounts of it were "the purest Munchausenism".

Chase Salmon Osborn: Osborn, who served as Governor of Michigan from 1911 to 1913, conducted the most extensive search for the man-eating tree. His travels through Madagascar resulted in his 1924 book, *Madagascar: Land of the Man-Eating Tree*. However, he never found the tree. He wrote in the book's introduction:

In travelling from one end of Madagascar to the other a thousand miles and across the great island, many times traversing the nearly four hundred miles of breadth, I did not see a man-eating tree. But from all the peoples I met, including Hovas, Sakalavas, Sihanakas, Betsileos and others, I heard stories and myths about it. To be sure the missionaries say it does not exist, but they are not united in this opinion, despite the fact that it is properly their affair and responsibility to discredit and destroy anything and everything that fosters demonism and idolatry. No missionary told me that he had seen the devil tree, but several told me that they could not understand how all the tribes could believe so earnestly in it, and over hundreds of miles where intercourse has been both difficult and dangerous, unless there were some foundation for the belief.

However, Osborn also admitted that his primary purpose in titling his book after the tree was simply to capture the attention of readers. The majority of his book did not deal with the tree:

I do not know whether this tigerish tree really exists or whether the bloodcurdling stories about it are pure myth. It is enough for my purpose if its story focuses your interest upon one of the least known spots of the world.

Ralph Linton: The anthropologist Ralph Linton spent several years in Madagascar during the 1920s. While he also wasn't there specifically to look for the tree, he apparently did ask around about it. Newspapers reported that, "He encountered several persons who believed that such a thing existed, but the tree was always in some other part of the country, and he arrived at the conclusion that the story was a myth." He was also quoted as saying that the story was "ridiculous and always was," but that, based on his experience in Madagascar, he would be willing to believe the island was home to man-eating fleas.

Capt. V. de la Motte Hurst: In August 1932, a United Press wire story reported that Capt. V. de la Motte Hurst, who was said to be a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, was going to lead an expedition to Madagascar specifically to hunt for the man-eating tree, which he

referred to as the "sacrifice tree." De la Motte Hurst was quoted as saying, "I have been told about the tree by many chiefs of the island and I have no doubt of its existence. It eats human beings, but since the natives worship it they are reluctant to reveal its location." He also planned to take along a movie camera to film the tree sacrifice. However, it's not clear if de la Motte Hurst's expedition ever left. At least, no more was ever heard of it.

**British Scientists To
Seek Tree Reported To
Devour Human Beings**

LONDON, Aug. 18—(UP)—A tree which devours human beings, particularly young women, is the main objective of an expedition to Madagascar, planned shortly by British scientists, it was announced today.

The man-eating tree reported on the island of Sinbad the Sailor, is said to have the shape of a large pineapple. Natives, according to the scientists, place young girls on it, whereupon tentacles reach out, draw in, crush the burden and consume all but the bones.

The tree also secretes an intoxicating liquor very popular with the natives, according to the scientists' report.

Article in the *Washington Reporter*, Aug 18, 1932

Willy Ley: During the 1950s, science writer Willy Ley came across the story of the man-eating tree, and while he didn't travel to Madagascar to search for the tree, he did conduct an extensive bibliographic search to hunt down the origin of the story. He realized that the story had to be a hoax. However, he arrived at some erroneous conclusions about the history of the story.

Ley knew that the story had once appeared in the *NY World*, but he didn't know that the story had originated there, so he didn't focus his search on that publication, noting that, "copies of newspapers three-quarters of a century old are hard to come by." Instead, he tried to discover the origin of the story by tracking down clues within the text itself. For instance, he conducted an extensive search for references to Karl Leche and Dr. Omelius Friedlowsky, eventually concluding that neither man existed.

Next, Ley focused on trying to track down "the elusive *Carlsruhe Scientific Journal*." This journal actually did once exist (see above), but Ley couldn't find any record of it in the Library of Congress, so he concluded that it too was fictitious.

Ley carefully searched through 17th and 18th Century reference works about Madagascar to see if any of them mentioned a man-eating tree, but he found nothing.

Finally, Ley discovered that the story of the man-eating tree had been published in the *Antananarivo Annual* and *Madagascar Magazine* for the Year 1881, and he mistakenly concluded that this was the original source of the story. He hypothesized:

"Of course the man-eating tree does not exist. There is no such tribe. The actual natives of Madagascar do not have such a legend. But at one time somebody made up the hoax, which was put into the only existing local magazine, possibly as a joke of some kind for the amusement of the readers who knew better. But it then got out of hand and the perpetrators thought it best to keep quiet."

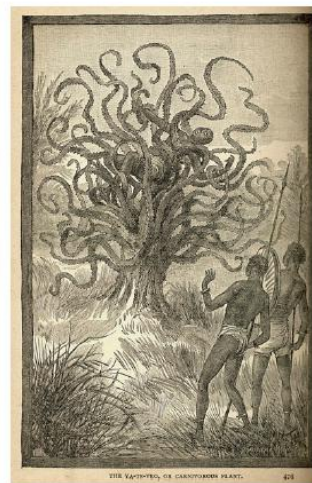
Other Man-Eating Plants

The popularity of the man-eating plant of Madagascar led to reports of other carnivorous plants. For instance, in October 1891, London newspapers reported that a British naturalist, Mr. Dunstan, had encountered a "vampire vine" while in Nicaragua:

It appears that a Mr. Dunstan, a naturalist, has lately returned from Central America, where he spent two years in the study of the plants and animals of those regions. In one of the swamps which surround the great Nicaragua Lake, he discovered the singular growth of which we are writing. 'He was engaged in hunting for botanical and entomological specimens, when he hears his dog cry out, as if in agony, from a distance. Running to the spot whence the animal's cries came, Mr. Dunstan found him enveloped in a perfect network of what seemed to be a fine, rope-like tissue of roots and fibres. The plant or vine seemed composed entirely of bare, interlacing stems, resembling, more than anything else, the branches of the weeping-willow denuded of its foliage, but of a dark, nearly black hue, and covered with a thick, viscid gum that exuded from the pores.' Drawing his knife, Mr. Dunstan attempted to cut the poor beast free; but it was with the very greatest difficulty that he managed to sever the fleshy muscular fibres of the plant. When the dog was extricated from the coils of the plant, Mr. Dunstan saw, to his horror and amazement, that the dog's body was bloodstained, 'while the skin appeared to have been actually sucked or puckered in spots,' and the animal staggered as if from exhaustion. 'In cutting the vine, the twigs curled like living, sinuous fingers about Mr. Dunstan's hand, and it required no slight force to free the member from its clinging grasp, which left the flesh red and blistered.'



And in *Sea and Land* (1887), J.W. Buel included a description and image of a Ya-Te-Veo tree, that was said to grow in South America. It supposedly caught and consumed humans by means of its long tendrils.



Ron Sullivan and Jon Eaton, writing in the *San Francisco Chronicle* in 2007, noted that the man-eating tree of Madagascar served as the "progenitor of a whole literary dynasty of sinister plants."

These included: "H.G. Wells' Strange Orchid (it stupefied its victims with perfume and sucked their blood with its tendrils); John Wyndham's peripatetic Triffids; the Widow's Weed in Gus Arriola's 'Gordo' comic strip; and, not least, Audrey II of 'Little Shop of Horrors.'"

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I've heard these trees prefer a dentist-rich diet.

Posted by Mark in Cincinnati on Sun Nov 27, 2011 at 08:22 PM

"However, it's not clear if de la Motte Hurst's expedition ever left. At least, no more was ever heard of it."

They obviously must have encountered one of the trees, then. . .

Posted by Accipiter on Tue Nov 29, 2011 at 07:46 AM

Awesome write-up! Well Done Alex!! SOOOO glad to have you back here working at the MoH!!

Posted by daveprime in Deep in the sticks...*yay internet!!* on Thu Dec 01, 2011 at 11:02 AM

It seems as if the man-eating tree turned into some sort of a drop-bear myth in Madagascar - an inside-joke told to clueless explorers for the amusement of natives. At least that's what it seems when taking into consideration the accounts of Chase Salmon Osborn, Ralph Linton and Capt. V. de la Motte Hurst, assuming that they weren't all lying to get attention.

I can see why this hoax became so wildly popular - it's hard to imagine an idea more terrifying and exotic than a killer flower. I, myself, was once fascinated by the idea of carnivorous plants - even wrote a short story containing an uninhabited island with three-metre high man-eating droseras dotting the landscape. That was back when I was eleven and nobody had had the heart to tell me that all the bug-eating montages in nature documentaries were sped up so I was actually under the impression that droseras curl around their victims in a matter of seconds.

Gah, I'm rambling again, sorry. Anyway, it's good to see new submissions on MoH. That was  a very entertaining and enlightening reading

smi Posted by Clodna in Estonia on Wed Dec 07, 2011 at 09:35 PM

It all sounds very much like a continuation of the centuries-old myth of the Indonesian Upas tree, which was said to be so deadly poisonous that merely smelling its fragrance would cause a man to drop dead within the minute. It *is* actually quite poisonous, but only when ingested; in the "Enlightened" centuries, though, its reputation as a large-scale man-killer was widespread. It still may be, in some places.

Posted by Richard Bos in the Netherlands on Wed Jun 12, 2013 at 06:06 AM

Good and well-searched article. I can add some new informations to the above. First please

note that the original publication date of the hoax is not 28 April 1874, but some days earlier (20 April). Why ?

What is digitized in [Fultonhistory](#) website is the weekly or bi-weekly edition of the New York World, not the daily. The weekly edition reprinted the story a week after its original appearance.

The daily edition seems not yet available online. On the daily, the article begins at the very top of the page, not in the middle, as I have been able to check in the microfilmed files of the newspaper.

There is much more to say about the story, its world-wide spread, the newspaper which originally published it (those which reprinted it) and the elusive author. I have done some extensive searches on these matters, part of them being published here in various French language magazines since 2007. In short :

What strongly helped the spreading of the story is its lecture in New South Wales small town, and its reprint in an South Australian newspaper in Fall 1874. This lecture and reprint are major events, because they lead to a subsequent reprint appearance in a scholarly journal, the Antananarivo Annual, in 1880-81 (from the said Australian journal). Though of small circulation, this scholar journal called serious attention to the story as a spurious folk tale but helped to establish the fame of it through the rest of the world. The gap between 1874-75 and 1880 is explained by the 4-years gap in the publication of the Antananarivo Annual then. Undoubtly, the 1880 issue was ready in 1875, but was delayed till 1880-81. It eventually explains why XXth century scholars lost the trace of the original 1874 source after 1880-81 - though the story have been translated into French language in 1877-78, widely reprinted here, and even being illustrated (by woodcuts) in popular magazines, at least twice differently the same year, 1878.

I doesn't need to say the tale has been taken here, as elsewhere, at face value...

Posted by Buard Jean-Luc in France on Sat Jun 15, 2013 at 04:59 PM

Sorry, the exact original date is 26 April 1874 (Sunday), not 20 April.

Posted by Buard Jean-Luc in France on Sun Jun 16, 2013 at 05:58 AM

The book "Gulliver of Mars" by Edwin Lester Arnold has a description of a man-eating plant that appears to have been inspired by this story.

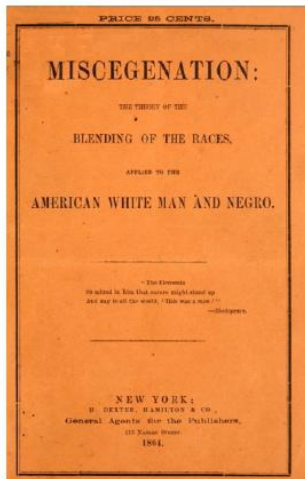
"He had killed a small ape that morning....cautiously advanced to the witch plant and gently hoisted the monkey over the blue palings. The moment its limp, dead feet touched the golden pool a shudder passed through the plant...."

"Quick as thought a spasm of life shot up the tendrils, and like tongues of blue flame they closed round the victim...."

"At the same time the petals began to rise...and by the time the woodman was back at my side the flower was closed."

"Closer and closer wound the blue tendrils; tighter and tighter closed the cruel petals with their iron grip; until at last we heard the ape's bones crackling like dry firewood; then next his head burst, his brains came oozing through the crevices, while blood and entrails followed them through every cranny...."

Shortly before Christmas, 1863, a 72-page pamphlet appeared for sale on newsstands in New York City. It cost a quarter and was titled *Miscegenation: The Theory of the Blending of the Races, Applied to the American White Man and Negro*.



The pamphlet opened with an explanation of its title. 'Miscegenation' was a word that the author of the pamphlet had coined, and so he explained that he had invented it by combining two latin words: *miscere* (to mix) and *genus* (race). He intended the term to describe a blending, or mixing of different races, thus replacing the word 'amalgamation' which was used at that time to describe interracial unions, but which he felt did not sound scientific enough.

The pamphlet went on to expound a social philosophy which, by modern standards, sounds extremely enlightened, but which by the racist standards of 1863 was highly inflammatory. He wanted to promote the practice of miscegenation. In other words, he wanted to encourage white and black people to have children with each other. The author wrote:

The miscegenetic or mixed races are much superior, mentally, physically, and morally to those pure or unmixed," the author proclaimed. Furthermore, he argued, the strength of the American nation stemmed "not from its Anglo-Saxon progenitors, but from all the different nationalities ... All that is needed to make us the finest race on earth is to engraft upon our stock the negro element.

After delineating the benefits to be attained by uniting the races, the author turned his attention to the Civil War that was then raging, and he argued that miscegenation should be a central goal of the war effort:

It is idle to maintain that this present war is not a war for the negro ... It is a war, if you please, of amalgamation ... a war looking, as its final fruit, to the blending of the white and black... Let the war go on... until church, and state, and society recognize not only the propriety but the necessity of the fusion of the white and black—in short, until the great truth shall be declared in our public documents and announced in the messages of our Presidents, that it is desirable the white man should marry the black woman and the white woman the black man.

The pamphlet ended by suggesting that Lincoln should add a miscegenation plank to the Republican party platform (the presidential election was approaching in November 1864), and that he should proclaim that "the solution of the negro problem will not have been reached in this country until public opinion sanctions a union of the two races... that in the millennial future, the most perfect and highest type of manhood will not be white or black but brown, or

colored, and that whoever helps to unite the various races of man, helps to make the human family the sooner realize its great destiny."

The Pamphlet Provokes Controversy

The author of this pamphlet had mailed out complimentary copies of this tract to prominent anti-slavery leaders, such as Lucretia Mott and the Grimke sisters, requesting their opinion about the work. Their replies came back by mid-January 1864, and they were all generally favorable, expressing admiration for the pamphlet's liberalism, but also urging the author demonstrate more caution. The Grimke sisters, for instance, wrote that they admired the pamphlet's principles, but they had grave doubts about the expediency of making miscegenation an issue in Republican politics.



Samuel Sullivan Cox,
Democratic Congressman

By February 1864 the pamphlet was being advertised for sale in abolitionist papers. But on February 17, a Democratic congressman named Samuel Sullivan Cox delivered a speech in Congress denouncing the pamphlet and claiming it represented the kind of social philosophy embraced by his Republican colleagues. Somehow Cox had been supplied with the favorable abolitionist reviews of the pamphlet, even though these had been mailed back directly to the anonymous author of the pamphlet, and he quoted from these liberally, heaping scorn upon these liberal thinkers.

Cox's speech was widely reprinted in the Democratic press, and it prompted a reply on March 16 from arch-Republican Horace Greeley, editor of the *New York Tribune*. In an editorial Greeley declared, somewhat ambiguously, that while he did not want to actually promote interracial marriage, he felt the issue was no one's business but the marrying couple's themselves.

The Democratic press took this statement and ran with it, wildly exaggerating what Greeley had said in their attempt to paint their Republican enemies as promoters of miscegenation. The Democratic *New York World*, for instance, declared that it wanted to "call attention to the fact that the leading Republican journal of the country is the unblushing advocate of 'miscegenation,' which it ranks with the highest questions of social and political philosophy."

Soon charges and countercharges were flying back and forth between the Republican and Democratic papers. One Democratic paper, the *New Hampshire Patriot*, wrote an article titled "Sixty-Four Miscegenation," in which it claimed (falsely) that 64 abolitionist school-mistresses in New England had given birth to mulatto babies. The Democratic papers spread this story far and wide.

Horace Greeley,
New York Tribune editor



By June the Miscegenation pamphlet had been reprinted in London, and it had prompted Dr. J.H. Van Evrie, a radical Democrat, to issue an anonymous pamphlet in response to it, titled "Subgenation: The Theory of the Normal Relation of the Races—An Answer to 'Miscegenation.'" Van Evrie's thesis was that the normal relation of the races was for black people to be subjugated to the will of white people.

Throughout the summer the Democratic press kept up its attempt to depict Republicans as promoters of miscegenation. By doing so, it hoped to appeal to the racism of white, working class communities, and thus convince them to vote against Lincoln in the upcoming election.

The Republicans and the abolitionists realized exactly what was going on. William Lloyd Garrison, editor of the abolitionist paper, the *Liberator*, wrote that there was a "certain class of people, seeking to bring opprobrium upon Republicans and Union men," by accusing them of "advocating what is termed 'miscegenation.'"

As the election neared the Democrats intensified their attack. They circulated pamphlets in the working-class districts of New York City with titles such as "Miscegenation and the Republican Party," and "The Miscegenation Record of the Republican Party." They also began to portray Lincoln as a supporter of miscegenation, claiming he desired the "amalgamation of the white working classes with negroes."

The Hoax Exposed

On November 1, a London paper that had Democratic sympathies, the *Morning Herald*, printed on its front page a letter it had received from an American correspondent. It gave the letter the headline:

"THE GREAT HOAX OF THE DAY! The Great Miscegenation Pamphlet Exposed—The 'Moon Hoax' in the Shade—Who Wrote the Book—How it came into Notice—Letters of Indorsement from Leading Progressives."

The letter revealed that the Miscegenation pamphlet had not been written by a Republican abolitionist. Instead it had been written by a couple of Democratic newspapermen who had penned the pamphlet, and then circulated it as a way to insert the inflammatory issue of miscegenation into the presidential election. The correspondent declared that the authors of the pamphlet would never be discovered, but looked forward to the moment when the exposé reached the States because, he predicted, the Republicans would look like fools for not having recognized the pamphlet's satirical intent.

It took three weeks for the London article to get back across the Atlantic to America, so that it was two weeks after the election when the Democratic *New York World* exposed the Miscegenation hoax on its front page. It declared that the Miscegenation pamphlet, which had been conceived as a satire, had been "received as a sermon" by the abolitionists.

However, the joke was on the Democrats, for despite their efforts to turn the working-class

public against the Republicans, they lost the election. The Republicans, glowing from their decisive victory in the polls, ignored the exposure of the miscegenation hoax.

Identity of the Author

The correspondent to the London *Morning Herald* had predicted no one would ever know who had authored the Miscegenation pamphlet, but this turned out not to be true. Six years later George Wakeman, a reporter for the Democratic *New York World*, died, and in his obituary the *World* stated that "His humor on paper was conspicuous in the celebrated Miscegenation hoax, of which he was part author."

At the turn of the century the main author of the hoax was revealed. It turned out to be another *New York World* reporter named David Goodman Croly. Croly was a prominent newspaperman, editor, and futurologist. His wife, who revealed his part in the hoax, was a well-known feminist.

Apparently these two *New York World* reporters had not only sent complimentary copies of the Miscegenation pamphlet to abolitionist leaders, they had also sent a copy to President Lincoln with a note attached that read, "I hereby transmit a copy of my work on 'Miscegenation' in the hope that after you have perused it, you will graciously permit me to dedicate to you another work on a kindred subject... I am tempted to make this request from the various measures of your administration looking to the recognition of the great doctrine of human brotherhood, and from your speech to the New York workingmen, in which you recognize the social and political equality of the white and colored laborer."

Lincoln never responded to this letter. Thus the Democrats failed to get what they really had hoped for, a presidential endorsement of miscegenation.

The *New York World*, from which the Miscegenation pamphlet had sprung, was itself a fairly unsuccessful paper. It lost money steadily until 1883, when it was bought out by Joseph Pulitzer.

Meanwhile, the word 'miscegenation,' coined in the 1863 pamphlet, endured and is still in use today.

- Kaplan, Sidney. "The Miscegenation Issue in the Election of 1864," *Journal of Negro History*, Vol.34, Issue 3, July 1949, 274-343.

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Mixed race sex is at the core of hatred in America. The fear by white men of sex between black males and white women has been the catalyst of much of the racial violence in our history. It is ironic that bigots would think so lowly of racial intimacy that they would deem it a "hoax". This shows how far apart the two sides of racial equality were. I would love to see the faces of the hoaxers in modern America where black guys and white girls regularly get together as if our awful history didn't exist. Hopefully they are rolling over in their graves!
Posted by Dale Marcelle in Costa Mesa, California on Sat Jan 26, 2013 at 02:12 PM



A real haunted house

Dorothea Puente's old house at 1426 F Street in Sacramento, California is for sale. Who is Dorothea Puente, you ask? She is a woman who ran a "boarding house" in the 1980s out of her Sacramento Victorian-style home. Unfortunately her tenants were drugged and murdered so their social security checks could be cashed. Eventually seven bodies were found buried in Dorothea's backyard.



Shovel

This property sold for \$560,000 on 08/31/2005, went into foreclosure last year, and is now listed on the market at around \$300K. The current MLS listing states, "Property has notorious history that must be disclosed."



Body

The FBI states that males make up at least 90% of the world-wide total of serial killers. Out of only 10% in the world who are female serial killers, one was found in Jeani Rector's own home town of Sacramento, California. Dorothea Puente was apprehended on November 11, 1988 and now serves life in Central California's Women's Facility (CCWF) in Madera County, California.



Saw

Interestingly enough, another rare type of serial killer lived in Jeani Rector's home town as well. 84% of all serial killers are Caucasian. But also in the 1980s, Morris Solomon Jr., a black man, murdered six prostitutes in Sacramento. Morris Solomon Jr.'s case failed to gain national attention due to the second, more controversial case of serial murder in Sacramento committed by Dorothea Puente.



Although Dorothea's house went up for sale last March, as of this issue of The Horror Zine, it has not yet sold. Notice how the back yard is now completely cemeted over. See a realitor's article about the house [HERE](#).

Police Car



Arrest



Dorothea Puente



Dorothea Puente



House

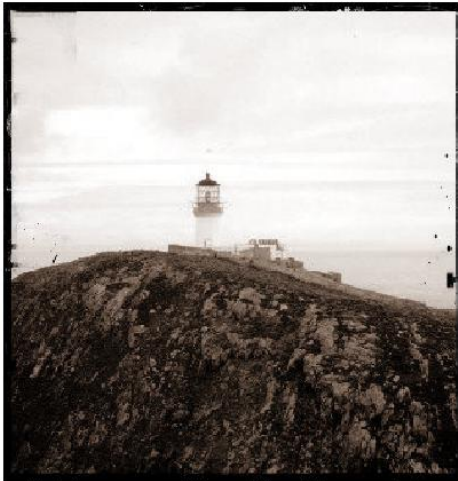


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Paul Dale Roberts

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Lighthouse on Eilean Mòr, Flannan Isles

Na h-Eileanan Flannach is the Scottish Gaelic name of the small group of islands known in English as the Flannan Isles, located in Scotland's Outer Hebrides (Na h-Eileanan Siar). Also known as the Seven Hunters they stand just over 20 miles (32 kilometres) from the Isle of Lewis (Leòdhas). They are a bird sanctuary and at times a place of beauty. At others these remote islands bear the brunt of severe Atlantic storms, which whip the seas into frenzy and force even the hardy gulls to stay sheltered in the cliff face crags. For many years they have remained uninhabited, the last residents of any length being the lighthouse keepers, who between 1899 and its automation in 1971, kept the light burning on the highest point of the island group, Eilean Mòr.

Until the lighthouse had been built between 1895 and 1899 it is probable that Na h-Eileanan Flannach had not been inhabited permanently since the days of the Celtic Church. The Celtic Church was predominant across the Celtic speaking world in the early middle ages (5th to the 10th century). On the island of Eilean Mòr is the ruin of an old chapel dedicated to St Flannan. However, over many centuries for many of the Gaelic Hebridean community the islands have been viewed as a place of superstition and bad luck. A view that was reinforced by the tragic and mysterious events that befell the lighthouse keepers on Eilean Mòr in mid-December 1900.

It is the fate of the lighthouse keepers in 1900; just over one year after the island's lighthouse came into operation that is the cause of much mystery and speculation. For all three keepers, Thomas Marshall, James Ducat and Donald Macarthur disappeared without trace. It was on 15th December 1900 that the ship Archtor which was sailing for Scotland from Philadelphia had reported that as they passed the islands the lighthouse was not in operation. In those days there was no radio communication between the keepers on Eilean Mòr and the shore station of Breasclete on Lewis. When the lighthouse tender Hesperus arrived on St Stephen's Day (26th December) 1900 having been delayed due to adverse conditions, they found the lighthouse abandoned.

The first man ashore was relief keeper Joseph Moore who found no sign of the missing men. His preliminary search revealed the doors to the lighthouse closed, the clocks now stopped, the beds unmade and fire not lit. Returning from the Hesperus with two other's the lighthouse must have felt eerie, having been abandoned without any visible reason. Lamps were all cleaned and filled and the only thing out of place was a chair by the kitchen table that had been knocked over. A further unusual thing was that two of the keeper's oilskins were missing, but the third set was still in place. The lighthouse keepers log had no further entries after the day that they disappeared and a message on a slate on 15th December 1900 (which would have later been transferred to the log) indicated all was well.



Map of Outer Hebrides and
Flannan Isles

Map of Outer Hebrides and Flannan Isles

A search of the island gave no sign of the three missing men. Searches of the vicinity revealed storm damage on the west landing of the island caused by severe weather, but the log indicated that this had happened prior to the last log entry of 15th December. However, a superintendent of the Northern Lighthouse Board (the general lighthouse authority for Scotland and Isle of Man), Robert Muirhead, came to Eilean Mòr on 29th December 1900 and he speculated that what had happened was that two of the keepers had gone to the western landing stage on 15th December to secure a box in which mooring ropes were stored. Then having been joined by the third keeper an exceptionally large wave had washed them away.

However, the real events of the December day will never be known. Why, for example did the third keeper leave the lighthouse (against regulations) and without the protection of his oilskins to join his colleagues. It was always made clear that the third keeper should not leave a lighthouse in a storm for any reason. Perhaps as some have also suggested, he had seen his fellow keepers in trouble and rushed to their aid, knocking over the chair on the way. However, if the men were on the west landing stage they would not have been in sight of anyone in the lighthouse nor within shouting distance. Strangely, if he was in such a panic, why had he stopped to secure the door of the lighthouse and its compound on the way to help his colleagues? The mystery remains unsolved, is likely to remain so and the bodies of the keepers were never found.

Events such as this will always attract speculation of the supernatural. It is easy to see why. These remote isolated rocky islands battered by the howling winds of the Atlantic. The high waves driven relentlessly against the cliff faces. The constant screeching of seabirds sounding like lost souls in a storm. It is said that keepers posted to the light house in Eilean Mòr after the tragedy never felt at ease there. It was thought by many to have a dark and foreboding atmosphere surrounding it and few lamented the automation of the lighthouse in 1971 which meant it no longer had to be manned. Like many such mysteries the stories surrounding the event become embellished with tales of prepared and uneaten food on the table which is something not recorded when Joseph Moore first entered the lighthouse on 26 December 1900.

Here is a poem by Wilfred Wilson Gibson (2nd October 1878 – 26th May 1962) called Flannan Isle:

Flannan Isle

Though three men dwell on Flannan Isle
To keep the lamp alight,
As we steer'd under the lee, we caught
No glimmer through the night!

A passing ship at dawn had brought
The news; and quickly we set sail,
To find out what strange thing might all
The keepers of the deep-sea light.

The winter day broke blue and bright,
With glancing sun and glancing spray,
As o'er the swell our boat made way,
As gallant as a gull in flight.

But, as we near'd the lonely Isle;
And look'd up at the naked height;
And saw the lighthouse towering white,
With blinded lantern, that all night
Had never shot a spark
Of comfort through the dark,
So ghastly in the cold sunlight
It seem'd, that we were struck the while
With wonder all too dread for words.

And, as into the tiny creek
We stole beneath the hanging crag,
We saw three queer, black, ugly birds--
Too big, by far, in my belief,
For guillemot or shag--
Like seamen sitting bold upright
Upon a half-tide reef:
But, as we near'd, they plunged from sight,
Without a sound, or spurt of white.

And still too mazed to speak,
We landed; and made fast the boat;
And climb'd the track in single file,
Each wishing he was safe afloat,
On any sea, however far,
So it be far from Flannan Isle:
And still we seem'd to climb, and climb,
As though we'd lost all count of time,
And so must climb for evermore.
Yet, all too soon, we reached the door--
The black, sun-blister'd lighthouse door,
That gaped for us ajar.

As, on the threshold, for a spell,
We paused, we seem'd to breathe the smell
Of limewash and of tar,

Familiar as our daily breath,
As though 'twere some strange scent of death:
And so, yet wondering, side by side,
We stood a moment, still tongue-tied:
And each with black foreboding eyed
The door, ere we should fling it wide,
To leave the sunlight for the gloom:
Till, plucking courage up, at last,
Hard on each other's heels we pass'd
Into the living-room.

Yet, as we crowded through the door,
We only saw a table, spread
For dinner, meat and cheese and bread;
But all untouch'd; and no one there:
As though, when they sat down to eat,
Ere they could even taste,
Alarm had come; and they in haste
Had risen and left the bread and meat:
For on the table-head a chair
Lay tumbled on the floor.
We listen'd; but we only heard
The feeble cheeping of a bird
That starved upon its perch:
And, listening still, without a word,
We set about our hopeless search.

We hunted high, we hunted low,
And soon ransack'd the empty house;
Then o'er the Island, to and fro,
We ranged, to listen and to look
In every cranny, cleft or nook
That might have hid a bird or mouse:
But, though we searched from shore to shore,
We found no sign in any place:
And soon again stood face to face
Before the gaping door:
And stole into the room once more
As frighten'd children steal.

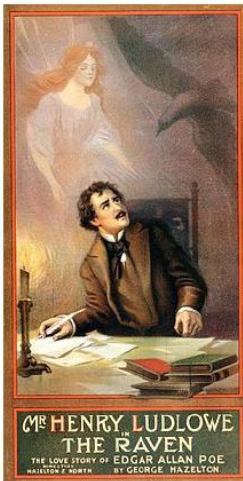
Aye: though we hunted high and low,
And hunted everywhere,
Of the three men's fate we found no trace
Of any kind in any place,
But a door ajar, and an untouch'd meal,
And an overtoppled chair.

And, as we listen'd in the gloom
Of that forsaken living-room--
O chill clutch on our breath--
We thought how ill-chance came to all
Who kept the Flannan Light:
And how the rock had been the death
Of many a likely lad:
How six had come to a sudden end
And three had gone stark mad:
And one whom we'd all known as friend
Had leapt from the lantern one still night,
And fallen dead by the lighthouse wall:
And long we thought
On the three we sought,
And of what might yet befall.

Like curs a glance has brought to heel,
We listen'd, flinching there:
And look'd, and look'd, on the untouch'd meal
And the overtoppled chair.

We seem'd to stand for an endless while,
Though still no word was said,
Three men alive on Flannan Isle,
Who thought on three men dead.

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A poster for George Hazelton's play The Raven.

In honor of the death of Edgar Allan Poe on this date in 1849, a tale about a macabre artifact from Poe's tomb.

Pen from Poe's Coffin.

The Weird Antics It Played on the Author of a Novel

As weird and uncanny as one of Poe's own stories of melancholy mystery is the tale of the haunted "Poe pen" with which George Hazelton, a New York lawyer, began to write a novel of the poet's life called "The Raven."

He was obliged to abandon the task on account of the unpleasant way the pen had of scribbling apparently meaningless word.

Mr. Hazelton, who does not believe in spiritual manifestations or ghost stories, will tell you, if you are fortunate enough to find him in a communicative mood, how the pen was made from the headboard of Poe's first coffin and presented to him by the wife of the editor of a Baltimore newspaper, who was present when Poe's body was removed from its shabby old coffin and placed in a new casket, in which it now reposes.

He also will tell you that out of consideration for the lady who gave him the penholder he tried to use it, but could not accustom himself to the uncanny associations connected with it.

Instead of inspiring him, it exerted a baleful influence over his thoughts and was guilty of weird pranks and hostile attempts to prevent him from writing.

In the glare of sunlight that flooded Mr. Hazelton's office on Broadway I had a long talk with the disciple of the melancholy genius.

There is a striking likeness between Mr. Hazelton and the portraits of Poe. For instance, the mournful dark eyes and the long jet black hair that emphasizes the yellowish pallor of the novelist's face.

It almost might be Poe himself were it not for the starched collar, smart four-in-hand tie and brown business suit.

"It is quite a long story," Mr. Hazelton said, "but if it will interest you I will tell all about the pen, only omitting the name of the lady who gave it to me.

"The pen was made from the headboard of Poe's first coffin after his remains were transferred from the old coffin to a new one, almost 35 years ago.

"There were only two or three persons present when the coffin was exhumed, among them the editor of a Baltimore newspaper. As the coffin was lifted out of the earth the headboard

crumbled and fell to the ground, disclosing all that remained of one of America's greatest geniuses.

"A gentleman picked up the fragments of the headboard and distributed them among those present. The editor took his share home to his wife. The bit of wood was just big enough to make a penholder and the idea struck the lady to have it made into a penholder and preserve it as a relic.

"Fearing that the wood might be changed if she did not superintend the whole proceeding, the lady went herself to the carpenter's and later to the jeweler's and saw the whole operation until the pen and the little silver penslip were complete.

A long time after that the pen came into my possession. It was when I first started to write my book that the lady, who is a very dear friend, asking me one day, when I was visiting Baltimore, if I would not like a penholder made from Poe's coffin.

"She expressed the belief that the pen, on account of associations, would lend inspiration to me for my work, called "The Raven," on which I was then engaged. I thanked her and promised to use the pen constantly.

"I began with merely writing the number of the chapter at which I was at work at the head of the blank page of manuscript. One night I was using the pen when suddenly I noticed the word 'Eronel' written through Chapter I. I looked again and put it down to the mischievous writing of a child or servant.

"I took a fresh sheet of paper and started to write "Chapter" at the head of it, when, almost before my eyes, the pen, of its own accord, wrote the name mysterious word 'Eronel.' I rubbed my eyes.

"The pen had gone dry. I dipped it into my inkwell, determined that the bit of wood should not bet the better of me again. Once more I started to write, this time pressing so hard on the holder that the pen sputtered frightfully, spattering my white shirt front with what appeared to be red ink, although I had none on my desk and never use it. Even as I looked it faded out of my sight.

"It all sounds absurd now, and since then I have had many people explain it away, as in fact I have tried to do myself. It was useless, however to try to write with the pen, for every time it repeated its uncanny tricks, until for the sake of the novel I gave up in despair.

"I couldn't waste all my time on a stupid pen that refused to write anything but the word 'Eronel,' and, as for helping me to think, it worked quite the contrary."

"But what did 'Eronel' mean?" I asked Mr. Hazelton, fearing that the story had stopped and I was to be left in doubt as to the import of the mysterious message.

"Well, I am coming to that," Mr. Hazelton assured me, laughingly. "I kept the two sheets of blank paper and called in all my friends to get their opinions on it. The word wasn't English; neither was it German nor French. Then somebody had a brilliant idea and suggested holding

it up to a mirror and the mystery was solved. The words means 'Lenore,' reversed."

The Cincinnati [OH] Enquirer 10 April 1909: p. 11

George Cochrane Hazelton was a lawyer, actor, author, and playwright, which suggests that this account is the early-20th-century version of a viral marketing campaign for *The Raven: The Love Story of Edgar Allan Poe*, Hazelton's novel, published by Appleton in 1909. His play, *The Raven*, was published in 1893, and in 1915 it was made into a silent film. See more here about the film. Nothing like a spooky backstory to create interest in a novel about Poe. And Hazelton is a convincing raconteur who "does not believe in spiritual manifestations or ghost stories" and is mum about the identity of his principal witness.

Poe was originally buried in a corner of Westminster Hall and Burying Ground in Baltimore, without a headstone, but as his literary star rose, his body was exhumed and reburied in a more prominent position in 1875, with an impressive new monument and orations from local notables. What happened to the rest of the old coffin? And any ideas about the identity of the "very dear friend," the wife of the editor of the Baltimore newspaper, who took home the coffin wood? A horrid thing to do, if it really happened, but certainly not unprecedented (see a previous post on secular relics.) A nice touch, that, the lady fearing that the wood might be changed unless she watched the whole operation.

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The Phantom Roman Army of Flower's Barrow

Flower's Barrow is an Iron Age hillfort, built over 2500 years ago, above Worbarrow Bay in Dorset on the south coast of England. When the Romans arrived, they took over the ancient fortifications. The area is said to be haunted by a phantom Roman army which has been spotted by multiple witnesses several times over the years. The ghost army was first sighted in December of 1678 and actually appeared to be to be real live soldiers. A local squire with his brother and four workmen were all witness to this spectacle where the Romans marched from Flower's Barrow over Grange Hill. They could even hear the clamor of the armor as the soldiers walked. Alarmed, the squire roused the locals and about 100 people were able to see the phantom army, which included soldiers and horses. Messengers were sent to nearby Wareham to warn them of an approaching army but of course, it never arrived. The army has also been seen nearby at [Bindon Hill](#) and Knowle Hill. This story and more can be found in *Haunted England: The Penguin Book of Ghosts* by Jennifer Westwood.

Flower's Barrow has a limited future because the southern part is falling into the sea at Worbarrow Bay due to coastal erosion. Probably more than half of it has already disappeared. The barrow is part of the Jurassic Coast, a World Heritage Site. The coastal exposures along the Jurassic coastline provide a continuous sequence of Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous rock formations spanning approximately 185 million years of the Earth's history.



A recent Magazine article reported on the dwindling number of Armenians in Myanmar, also known as Burma. As Jonah Fisher reports from Yangon, the head of the Armenian Church has been to meet the local congregation and has made some changes.

To mark the visit of the head of the Armenian Church the garden was tidied, the fence re-painted, and one of Yangon's new heritage plaques erected outside.

It proudly states that at the age of 152, St John the Baptist's is "Yangon's oldest surviving church".

For most of those years Yerevan has had very little to do with this small remote outpost.

Now that's changing and Catholicos Karekin II came to Yangon to try to resolve a dispute over the management of the church and its property.

Jonah Fisher visits the church in Yangon and meets John Felix

When the last full Armenian (both parents) in Myanmar died six years ago, effective control had passed into the hands of a man who had no connection with either Armenia or the Orthodox tradition.

"Father" John Felix, as the sign in the street outside calls him, had taken over the running of the church. A Burmese man of Indian extraction, he claimed to be an ordained Anglican priest which would, with the Armenians' permission, give him the right to perform religious services.

Felix comes across as a very pleasant, humble man, but unfortunately the Anglican church says he has never been a priest.

"He's not recognised by our Church any more, once he was a deacon," the Archbishop of Myanmar Stephen Than Myint Oo told me.

The archbishop makes a veiled reference to inappropriate behaviour and says "Felix does not have the

authority to perform religious services."

Felix says the allegations are just "rumours", that he has the correct documentation and that efforts are being made to undermine him.

Shortly after we met, he was called to a meeting with the Catholicos Karekin II, told that he could no longer work in the church and asked to return the keys.

Felix refused, and according to the Armenian Church is now effectively a squatter on the historic site. A legal battle looks likely.

Nevertheless, the church doors opened on Saturday for the biggest Armenian mass in Myanmar in decades. The altar was re-consecrated and it was announced that an Armenian priest based in Calcutta would be flying in every weekend to conduct services.

The Armenians are hoping that this rather painful trip will prove to be a badly needed turning point for the community.

The Principality of Sealand off the Suffolk Coast, UK, claims to be the world's smallest country with just 22 residents

June 06, 2014

news.com.au

- 5 months ago



The fort claiming to be the world's smallest country.

Source: AP

LYING in international waters off the coast of England sits a tiny fort that claims to be the world's smallest country.

Located 10 kilometres from the Suffolk Coast in southeast England, the Principality of

Sealand declared its independence from Britain in 1967. Home to just 22 residents, it has its own royal family, currency, stamps and even a football team — the Sealand All Stars.

More like an oil rig to look at, Sealand occupies a fort left over from World War II, and is basically two concrete towers connected by an iron platform.



The old fort from World War II now has a royal family. Source: News Limited

The story goes that British Major Paddy Roy Bates took over the site from pirate broadcasters with the intent to start his own radio station called Radio Essex.

Following his occupation, he attempted to establish Sealand as a nation-state in 1975 writing a national constitution and establishing other national symbols.

Despite it not being recognised as a state, the Bates family manage it as though it is a recognised sovereign entity and have given themselves royal titles. Prince Roy and his wife Princess Joan (now

deceased) named their son His Royal Highness Prince Michael who serves as Sealand's acting Head of State.

We're not sure how much a Sealand dollar will get you. Picture: www.sealandgov.org Source: Supplied

Tourists can help bolster the local economy by purchasing souvenirs from the online shop as well as royal titles. For \$360 you can buy the title of Count or Countess of Sealand or become



a lord or lady for \$52. You can even buy one square foot of the fort for just \$32.

In October 2012, Roy Bates died at the age of 91, and the Sealand crown passed to his son, Michael, 63, who is still said to live on Sealand with his family and friends.



On 3 June 2002, the *Beijing Evening News* appeared to have scooped its competitors when it ran a story alleging that the U.S. Congress was threatening to leave Washington DC if the city didn't construct a new Capitol building that included a retractable dome. The article said that Congress was even considering a move to a town such as Memphis or Charlotte if the DC city government didn't buckle under to its demands.

House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert (R-Ill.) was quoted as saying, "Don't get us wrong. We actually love the dilapidated [old] building. But the cruel reality is, it's no longer suitable for use by a world-class legislature. Its contours are ugly, there's no room to maneuver, there aren't enough bathrooms, and let's not even talk about the parking."

The article struck Henry Chu, a Beijing-based reporter for the *Los Angeles Times*, as rather odd. Why would American papers not be covering such a dramatic political development? But when Chu did some fact checking, he discovered that American papers actually were covering the story. In fact, an American publication had been the source for it. However, that publication was *The Onion*, a humor magazine whose stories are clearly recognizable (at least to American readers) as satire.

Chu surmised that a reporter for the *Beijing Evening News* had simply translated the *Onion's* story almost word for word, not realizing that the article was a satirical take on the relationship between sports teams and their host cities. The *Evening News* had then printed the tale as fact without indicating its source.

Chu questioned the *Evening News* about the story, but the paper's international editor reacted defensively to his suggestion that its reporting was inaccurate. "How can you prove it's not correct?" The editor demanded. "Is it incorrect just because you say it is?"

The editor of the *Onion*, by contrast, happily admitted the story didn't contain a word of truth. He commented, "Wow, even journalists now believe everything they read."

- Henry Chu. (June 7, 2002). "Reeled In by a Spoof, Chinese Daily Shrugs Off Its Capitol Error." *Los Angeles Times*.
- "Congress threatens to leave D.C. unless new capitol is built," (May 29, 2002). *The Onion*.

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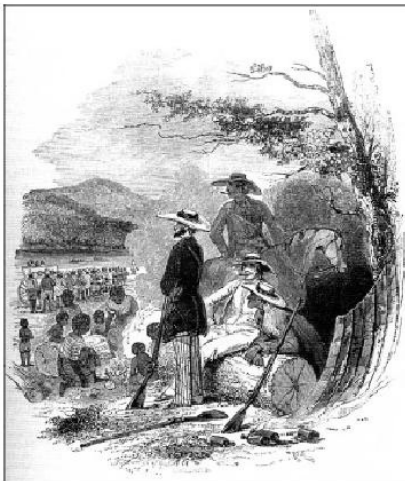


Illustration from the front cover of Featherstonhaugh's *Excursion Through the Slave States*, depicting the encounter between the traveler and a gang of slave traders. On August 21, 1844, the *Ithaca Chronicle* published an extract from a book titled *Roorback's Tour Through the Western and Southern States in 1836* written by Baron Roorback. The extract, it said, had been sent to them by a correspondent who called himself "An Abolitionist."

Part of the extract described an encounter between Roorback and a gang of slaves led by slave traders on the Duck River in Tennessee. It contained the following passage:

Forty of these unfortunate beings had been purchased, I was informed, of the Hon. J. K. Polk, the present speaker of the house of representatives; the mark of the branding iron, with the initials of his name on their shoulders distinguishing them from the rest.

James Polk was, in 1844, running for President of the United States as the Democratic candidate. In the context of the times, the claim that Polk was a slaveowner was not particularly shocking. In fact, Polk did own a small number of slaves on his plantation in Mississippi. His opponent, Clay, owned a far greater number. Far more inflammatory was the suggestion that Polk branded his slaves. In reality, this was a practice almost never used by slaveowners, not only because it was cruel, but also because the sale of branded slaves was extremely difficult.

The idea that Polk would treat his slaves so viciously shocked voters, and the Whig press was quick to disseminate the claim. It was first republished by the Albany Evening Journal and then by Whig newspapers throughout the Northern states.

However, the Democratic press soon exposed the extract from Roorback's book as a falsehood. In reality, there was no such person as Baron Roorback, nor any book by him. The extract had been lifted and loosely adapted from a recent travel memoir by George W. Featherstonhaugh, *Excursion Through the Slave States*. Featherstonhaugh had described meeting a gang of slave traders in Virginia. However, he had never mentioned the owner of the slaves. In fact, he never mentioned Polk's name at all. These details had been invented.

The Whig Response

The exposure of the hoax embarrassed the Whigs. However, while they admitted fault for uncritically accepting the slander, they denied inventing it. The *Ithaca Chronicle* claimed that the extract had been submitted to them by a local democrat, William Linn. In other words, the

Whigs argued that they were the victims of the hoax, that it was a dirty trick designed to embarrass them.

Daniel McKinney, a young Whig, published a statement to this regard:

"This is to certify, that on or about the 19th day of August, 1844, Wm. Linn. Esq., called on me with an article purporting to be an extract from Roorback's Tour through the Western and Southern States, requesting me to copy the same and hand it in to the Editor of the Chronicle for publication, stating as a reason for this request, that there was a Locofoco printer in that office, who was acquainted with his chirography. I complied with his request, without the slightest suspicion that it was not a genuine extract from a veritable book."

Motive

As it turned out, the Roorback hoax was not the only smear tactic used by the Whigs (assuming it was the Whigs who invented the story) during the 1844 campaign. A lie also circulated suggesting that Polk's father had been a Tory during the American Revolution. His father had actually been an early supporter of independence.

Why might the Whigs have resorted to such tactics? Historian James Rogers suggests that it stemmed from the unpopularity of Clay's position on the issue of the expansion of the Union. The Democrats were in favor of promptly annexing Texas and Oregon. Clay, however, advocated delaying any decision. Rogers writes:

The Roorback Hoax appears to be a desperate Whig attempt to move the electoral debate to some other issue, especially in key states like New York. If they could insert a change in subject to one that focused on character and morality, maybe the Whigs could regain the campaign initiative and emphasize economic policy.

The Whig tactics proved unsuccessful, and Polk won the election.

"Roorback" subsequently became a term used to describe any fictitious claim invented to smear a political opponent, i.e. a political dirty trick.. It was popular throughout the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth. In 1940 the *Chicago Tribune* offered this definition:

"A roorback is a false report about some alleged misdeed in a candidate's past, often based on forged evidence, circulated in the final days of a campaign. It is timed for climactic effect when the candidate will not be able to expose the fraud before the voters go to the polls."

However, it has now dropped from popular usage.

- "Roorback: what it is and where it got its name disclosed." (Apr 12, 1938). *Chicago Daily Tribune*. pg. 2.
- "Beware of Baron Roorback." (Oct 23, 1940). *Chicago Daily Tribune*. pg. 14.



The Fordlândia Power-house, ca. 1935

In the early 20th century, a cartel of Dutch and English rubber barons had a stranglehold on the vast majority of the world's supply of rubber. At that time the sole source of rubber was the South American tree *Hevea brasiliensis*, whose sap is natural latex. In the 1870s a gaggle of entrepreneurial smugglers had secreted a stash of wild rubber tree seeds out of the Amazon rain forest, which they used to establish sprawling plantations in East Asia. These smothered the output of Brazil, causing their owners to eventually enjoy the majority of the world's rubber business.

But by the late 1920s, the infamous automobile tycoon Henry Ford set out to break the back of this rubbery monopoly. His hundreds of thousands of new cars needed millions of tires, which were very expensive to produce when buying raw materials from the established rubber lords. To that end, he established

Fordlândia, a tiny piece of America which was transplanted into the Amazon rain forest for a single purpose: to create the largest rubber plantation on the planet. Though enormously ambitious, the project was ultimately a fantastic failure.

In the year 1929, Ford hired a native Brazilian named Villares to survey the Amazon for a suitable location to host the massive undertaking. Brazil seemed the ideal choice considering that the trees in question were native to the region, and the rubber harvest could be shipped to the tire factories in the US by land rather than by sea. On Villares' advice, Ford purchased a 25,000 square kilometer tract of land along the Amazon river, and immediately began to develop the area. A barge-toting steamer arrived with earth-moving equipment, a pile driver, tractors, stump pullers, a locomotive, ice-making machines, and prefabricated buildings. Workers began erecting a rubber processing plant as the surrounding area was razed of vegetation.



Riverside Avenue in Fordlândia

Scores of Ford employees were relocated to the site, and over the first few months an American-as-apple-pie community sprung up from what was once a jungle wilderness. It included a power plant, a modern hospital, a library, a golf course, a hotel, and rows of white clapboard houses with wicker patio furniture. As the town's population grew, all manner of businesses followed, including tailors, shops, bakeries, butcher shops, restaurants, and shoemakers. It grew into a thriving community with Model T Fords frequenting the neatly paved streets.

Outside of the residential area, long rows of freshly-planted saplings soon dotted the landscape. Ford chose not to employ any botanists in the development of Fordlândia's rubber tree fields, instead relying on the cleverness of company engineers. Having no prior knowledge of rubber-raising, the engineers made their best guess, and planted about two hundred trees per acre despite the fact that there were only about seven wild rubber trees per acre in the Amazon jungle. The plantations of East Asia were packed with flourishing trees, so it seemed reasonable to assume that the trees' native land would be just as accommodating.

Henry Ford's miniature America in the jungle attracted a slew of workers. Local laborers were offered a wage of thirty-seven cents a day to work on the fields of Fordlândia, which was about double the normal rate for that line of work. But Ford's effort to transplant America-- what he called "the healthy lifestyle"-- was not limited to American buildings, but also included mandatory "American" lifestyle and values. The plantation's cafeterias were self-serve, which was not the local custom, and they provided only American fare such as hamburgers. Workers had to live in American-style houses, and they were each assigned a number which they had to wear on a badge-- the cost of which was deducted from their first paycheck. Brazilian laborers were also required to attend squeaky-clean American festivities on weekends, such as poetry readings, square-dancing, and English-language sing-alongs.



Rubber tree saplings

One of the more jarring cultural differences was Henry Ford's mini-prohibition. Alcohol was strictly forbidden inside Fordlândia, even within the workers' homes, on pain of immediate termination. This led some industrious locals to establish businesses-of-ill-repute beyond the outskirts of town, allowing workers to exchange their generous pay for the comforts of rum and women.

While the community struggled along month-to-month with its disgruntled workforce, it was also faced with a rubber dilemma. The

tiny saplings weren't growing at all. The hilly terrain hemorrhaged all of its topsoil, leaving infertile, rocky soil behind. Those trees which were able to survive into arbor adolescence were soon stricken with a leaf blight that ate away the leaves and left the trees stunted and useless. Ford's managers battled the fungus heroically, but they were not armed with the necessary knowledge of horticulture, and their efforts proved futile.

Workers' discontent grew as the unproductive months passed. Brazilian workers-- accustomed to working before sunrise and after sunset to avoid the heat of the day-- were forced to work proper "American" nine-to-five shifts under the hot Amazon sun, using Ford's assembly-line philosophies. And malaria became a serious problem due to the hilly terrain's tendency to pool water, providing the perfect breeding ground for mosquitoes.

In December of 1930, after about a year of working in a harsh environment with a strict and



Fordlandia time clock, destroyed in the riot of December 1930

disagreeable "healthy lifestyle", the laborers' agitation reached a critical mass in the workers' cafeteria. Having suffered one too many episodes of indigestion and degradation, a Brazilian man stood and shouted that he would no longer tolerate the conditions. A chorus of voices joined his, and the cacophony was soon joined by an orchestra of banging cups and shattering dishes. Members of Fordlândia's American management fled swiftly to their homes or into the woods, some of them chased by machete-wielding workers. A group of managers scrambled to the docks and

boarded the boats there, which they moved to the center of the river and out of reach of the escalating riots.

By the time the Brazilian military arrived three days later, the rioters had spent most of their anger. Windows were broken and trucks were overturned, but Fordlândia survived. Work resumed shortly, though the rubber situation had not improved. A British journalist writing for the *Indian Rubber Journal* visited in 1931, and wrote, "In a long history of tropical agriculture, never has such a vast scheme been entered in such a lavish manner, and with so little to show for the money. Mr. Ford's scheme is doomed to failure."

The intervening months offered little evidence to counter the journalist's grim depiction. In 1933, after three years with no appreciable quantity of rubber to show for the investment, Henry Ford finally hired a botanist to assess the situation. The botanist tried to coax some fertile rubber trees from the pitiful soil, but he was ultimately forced to conclude that the land was simply unequal to the task. The damp, hilly terrain was terrible for the trees, but excellent for the blight. Unfortunately no one had paid attention to the fact that the land's previous owner was a man named Villares-- the same man Henry Ford had hired to choose the plantation's site. Henry Ford had been sold a lame portion of land, and Fordlândia was an unadulterated failure.



Blight-stricken rubber tree

Never one to surrender to circumstance, Ford purchased a new tract of land fifty miles downstream, establishing the town of *Belterra*. It was more flat and less damp, making it much more suitable for the finicky rubber trees. He also imported some grafts from the East Asian plantations, where the trees had been bred for resistance to the leaf blight. Starting from scratch, the new enterprise showed more promise than its predecessor, but progress was slow. For ten years Ford's workers labored to transform soil into

rubber, yielding a peak output of 750 tons of latex in 1942-- far short of that year's goal of

38,000 tons.

Be that as it may, Ford's perseverance might have eventually paid off if it were not for the fact that scientists developed economical synthetic rubber just as Belterra was establishing itself. In 1945, Ford retired from the rubbering trade, having lost over \$20 million in Brazil without ever having set foot there. A company press release announced the abandonment of Belterra with a bland epitaph: "Our war experience has taught us that synthetic rubber is superior to natural rubber for certain of our products." The Ford Motor Company sold the land back to the Brazilian government for \$250,000-- a token sum.

The solid structures of Fordlândia and Belterra were left largely empty for the decades following the towns' demise. Teams of Brazilian workers were tasked with maintaining the areas to preserve the buildings, but their remote locations left the Brazilian government wondering how it could possibly take advantage of the modern facilities. Until recently the resources have gone largely untapped; today the plantation towns are being marketed as stops on Amazon tours. At Belterra, a building once used to coagulate rubber was briefly reanimated for the purposes of producing surgical gloves and condoms, but it was a short-lived enterprise. Much of the plantation land is now used for local agriculture, producing crops such as beans, rice, and corn. Many of the towns' residents today are squatters.



Fordlandia ca. 2005

Henry Ford's losses in Fordlândia and Belterra are equivalent to \$200 million in modern dollars. Certainly he was unable to buy his way into rubber royalty, and his efforts to spread his American "healthy lifestyle" were met with resentment and hostility... but history has repeatedly shown that obscene wealth gives one the privilege-- perhaps even the obligation-- to make bizarre and astonishing mistakes on a grand scale. From that perspective, Fordlândia

could not have been more successful.

Written by Alan Bellows, posted on 03 August 2006. Alan is the founder/designer/head writer/managing editor of Damn Interesting.

In the classic millennial film *The Mighty Ducks*, which was so awesome it convinced me and my frail pre-teen body to become a roller hockey goalie (to predictable ends), the team makes use of the iconic “Flying V” formation when in a pinch. The power of such a formation is of course proven in migrating birds, which can better cruise when in the upwash of the individuals ahead of them as they make their way to more hospitable climes in the winter.

Sure, now we know where they go, but our forebears really struggled with the problem of birds disappearing every winter. There were all kinds of theories, but none was more bizarre than that of English minister and scientist Charles Morton, who in the 17th century wrote a surprisingly well-reasoned, though obviously totally inaccurate, treatise claiming birds migrate to the moon and back every year.

That’s right. To the moon and back. And Morton was even aware of how epic this journey would be. He estimated the one-way trip to be 179,712 miles (he wasn’t so far off—the moon varies between 226,000 miles and 252,000 miles away, on account of its elliptical orbit), and reckoned it would take the birds 60 days to reach our satellite flying a dizzying 125 mph. Still, Morton reasoned, they pulled it off. And, really, because some species seem to disappear entirely, the only logical conclusion is that they set off into space. “Now, whither should these creatures go, unless it were to the moon?” he asked.

Whither should they go indeed.

Flock and Awe

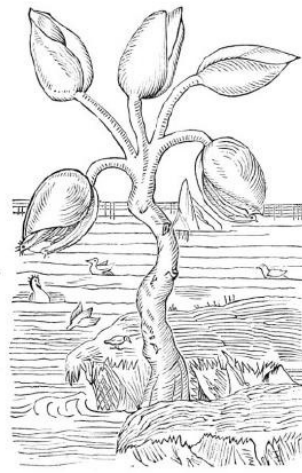
Before we get to the particulars of Morton’s strange theory of migration, it’s worth noting the many other theories of antiquity, beginning with Aristotle, who reckoned that some birds hibernate while others simply transform into different species when winter comes around. Redstarts, for instance, morph into robins in winter—a fantastical claim that’s easier to understand when you consider that redstarts indeed migrate to Africa as robins make their way to Greece.

Later, the great Roman naturalist Pliny the Elder wrote of the pygmies, a race of tiny humans in Africa that do eternal battle with cranes (the birds, not the construction equipment). He notes “that in springtime their entire band, mounted on the backs of rams and she-goats and armed with arrows, goes in a body down to the sea and eats the cranes’ eggs and chickens, and that this outing occupies three months.” It’s an echo of Homer’s mention of cranes in the *Iliad*, birds that do indeed migrate from Europe to Africa: “shriek of cranes down from heaven / who flee the winter and the terrible rains / and fly off to the world’s end / bringing death and doom to the Pygmy-men / as they open fierce battle at dawn.”

Medieval bestiaries, sorts of zoological encyclopedias that every once in a while contained actual facts, often featured the barnacle goose, which supposedly grows on trees over water. It was a convenient explanation for geese simply turning up, seemingly out of nowhere, after



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their migration. Also convenient: Catholics aren't supposed to eat meat other than fish on Fridays, but because the barnacle goose isn't born from an egg, wrote Gerald of Wales in 1187, "in some parts of Ireland, bishops and men of religion make no scruple of eating these birds on fasting days, as not being flesh, because they are not born of flesh."

(The same logic has variously been applied to beavers, whose tails apparently taste like fish, as well as the giant rodent capybara of South America, which spends so much time in marshes that some argued to the church that it should be classified as a fish.)

In the 16th century, the great cartographer and writer Olaus Magnus championed the theory that swallows disappear in the winter not because they travel to tropical climes to pick up coconuts, but because they bury themselves in the clay at the bottom of rivers. They come together in the fall in huge swarms, then sink down into the mud en masse, only to reemerge in the spring. But in his famous map the *Carta Marina*, Magnus also echoed the tale of the barnacle goose with an illustration of ducks being born from a tree.

Fly Me to the Moon

But back to Morton. According to Thomas P. Harrison in his essay "Birds in the Moon," Morton quite rightly noted that migrating avians recognize "changes of the air where they are," or notice the "alteration of abatement of their daily food," and are therefore stirred to "obtain what is more suitable to them or to avoid what is offensive" and begin their migration. He refutes, however, the position of Olaus Magnus that birds make their way into the clay at the bottoms of rivers. There's the rather glaring problem of the lack of air, he notes, not to mention frigid temperatures.

Instead, because no one has seen where these birds go, they must be leaving Earth. Why else, then, would sailors report a woodcock flying in to land on their ship not from the horizon, but "right down from above"? It had to have been returning to our planet from space.

But how could they get back and forth between the celestial bodies? Luckily, in space the birds "encounter no air resistance and are unaffected by gravitation," writes Harrison. "They are sustained by excess fat," which turns out to be true in migrating birds, "and they sleep most of the journey of two months." (Definitely not true, though migrating birds do indeed nod off for a few seconds at a time.)

Now, it's important to note that it was a widely held belief in Morton's time that all of the planets in our solar system must necessarily be inhabited, since a higher power wouldn't take



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the trouble of creating planets and moons and have them just sit there all lonely-like. Even the discoverer of Uranus, William Herschel, went so far as to argue in 1795 that the sun held life as well. And even as late as the early 1900s, American astronomer Percival Lowell claimed he had discovered alien-built canals on Mars, which turned out to just be an optical illusion.

So Morton's birds would find the moon quite well-appointed with vegetation and water. Indeed, according to Harrison, Morton's inspiration for all of this likely came from John Wilkins, a founder of the famed Royal Society, who in 1638 published "The Discovery of a New World in the Moon." In it, Wilkins argued "that the moon, with its

borrowed light, is like our earth with its seas, streams, mountains, and so on," writes Harrison. Wilkins goes on to suggest humans might get to the moon by attaching wings to our arms, or train birds to take us there.



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Then along comes the author Francis Godwin, who just five months after Wilkins' work publishes the tale of the adventurer Domingo Gonsales. Our hero trains 25 probably-somewhat-hesitant swans to ferry him around, but to his "unspeakable fear and amazement, [the birds] struck bolt upright" higher and higher and higher, until "the lines slacked; neither I nor the engine moved at all, but continued still, as having no manner of weight."

They were on their way to the moon. And when they arrived Gonsales found trees three times as high and five times as thick as our own. But more importantly, there was wildlife, none of which compared to ours, "except swallows, nightingales, cuckows, woodcocks, batts, and some kind of wild fowl," birds that "spend their time, in their absence from us, in that world."

Such fiction became science in the 1600s, according to Harrison, and greatly influenced Morton's theory of the moon migration. But in 1676, a man named Francis Willughby set us down the path to avian truth when he published *Ornithologia*, a masterwork of bird science we can file with such classics as John James Audubon's *Birds of America*. While Willughby, like Morton, refuted Aristotle's notion that swallows hibernate, he wasn't under the impression that they instead went to the moon. More modestly, it was to the warmth of northern Africa.

Today we understand quite clearly that the vacuum of space is fatal to any creature other than the ridiculously hardy water bear, not to mention that the velocity required to escape Earth's gravity is 25,000 mph, unattainable for birds without rockets strapped to their backs. But Morton's inquiry was just one in a long line of eventually successful attempts to decipher the mystery of migration, a line that led so beautifully to the flying V of the Mighty Ducks, and my eventual head injury.

Which would explain a lot...

Browse the full Fantastically Wrong archive here. Have a crazy theory or myth you want me to cover? Email matthew_simon@wired.com or ping me on Twitter at [@mrMattSimon](https://twitter.com/mrMattSimon).

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By day, Lillian Egner works as a program manager for the Soap Factory, an experimental art space in downtown Minneapolis. A typical week for Mike McGinley, who works at St. Croix Sensory, his family's business, involves odor-testing kitty litter and training environmental-protection officers in the correct use of the Nasal Ranger, a nose-mounted, megaphone-shaped "field olfactometer" invented by his father to measure smell. But, every October for the past eight years, Egner, McGinley, and a crew of artists and volunteers have come together to create a custom smellscape

for the Haunted Basement.

Housed directly beneath the Soap Factory galleries, in the building's grimy, raw underground space, the Haunted Basement consists of a series of rooms, or scenes, each created by an emerging artist. Despite (or perhaps because of) its highbrow origins, it's generally agreed to be the freakiest haunted house in town—only adults are allowed in, dressed in closed-toe shoes and a protective face mask, and armed with a safe word ("uncle"), just in case. Visitors enter in groups but often get separated as they move through the twelve-thousand-square-foot space; they can expect to crawl, climb, and run, to get covered in gore, and, in 2013, to be stuffed into a coffin by a toothless man in an orange jumpsuit. The entire experience lasts a brief but intense twenty minutes, though nearly a hundred people bailed out early this year by crying uncle.

Over the years, haunted-house designers (hauntrepreneurs, as they sometimes call themselves) have developed a finely tuned vocabulary of architectural, lighting, audio, and animatronic techniques to provoke fear. A twisting, maze-like floor plan, for example, induces disorientation and cuts down sight lines, increasing the opportunities to deliver a "startle" scare—that pants-wetting moment when a zombie pops out of nowhere. Careful lighting creates pockets of shadow in which actors can hide; a soundtrack can shock, distract, and contribute to over-all discomfort; and fog machines generate a reliably creepy atmosphere. Rubber limbs, fake blood, and animatronic ghouls add the appropriate touches of visceral horror. But smell, despite its ability to affect mood, enrich narrative, and add authenticity, is not usually part of the package.

That's partly because odor is extremely hard to deliver effectively. The physics governing sound and light is much better understood and easier to manipulate than the physics governing volatile aromatic compounds, which disperse and persist in ways that are difficult to predict. Early experiments with theatrical scenting, such as Hollywood's Smell-O-Vision and AromaRama systems, were critical flops, with audiences complaining that smells took too

long to reach them and were either undetectable or too strong—or, worse, failed to disperse on time, accumulating into muddy, headache-inducing clouds.

Today, fifty-four years after Smell-O-Vision's underwhelming début, episodic smell delivery is still an unsolved problem. Mike McGinley, a chemical engineer by training, was drawn to it. In 2007, he read an interview with the Soap Factory team in a local paper, midway through their first Haunted Basement production. "It's a different type of haunted house being put up by artists to raise money for an art gallery," McGinley said. "I read that and I thought, Boy, that sounds really cool. Then I got to this line about how they were striving for a multisensory experience. And I sat there going, I think I need to make a phone call."

One cold call later, McGinley and the St. Croix Sensory squad (known affectionately by Egner as the Nasal Rangers) became a permanent part of the Soap Factory's haunting team. "I absolutely couldn't imagine it without them," Egner, who has been with the Soap Factory since the very first (odorless) Haunted Basement, told me. "It makes it so much easier to manipulate visitors, because you can't guard against your perception of smells. It's very powerful." Meanwhile, for McGinley, the collaboration has offered a fun excuse to conduct research on odor dispersal, as well as the chance to tackle some of the challenges that have stopped smell from being an easily deliverable media format.

The first year, McGinley said, "we started simple. I believe it was five smells we utilized, in maybe seven different areas of their basement. You know, fairly basic smells—death and body odor and things like that." It turns out that death, in odor form, is indeed straightforward: a couple of relatively coöperative naturally occurring chemicals, putrescine and cadaverine, are responsible for the characteristic smell of a decaying corpse. McGinley simply orders a small quantity of each from a chemical-supply store every September, and they show up in the mail.

The cadaverine has since become a trademark—both artists and audiences apparently complain if the Nasal Rangers try to leave it out. But, from that base, the Haunted Basement odorscape has greatly increased in complexity and nuance. "This year, we developed twenty-four different smells for the whole space," McGinley said. A collaboration that used to start in late summer now continues year round, as McGinley builds a mental catalogue of particularly disgusting smells encountered during the course of his regular odor-analysis work. One commercial project, which involved testing a new air freshener for its effectiveness against various household smells, resulted in a "garbage recipe" that McGinley used in a Unabomber-style trailer scene in the following year's Haunted Basement. "Some things we were learning through that process helped us understand how smells of garbage might work *real* well for certain situations in the basement," he said, with the tone of a man who has smelled far too much garbage.

The artists, meanwhile, develop a new layout and story line each year, which often leads to unexpected challenges. Once, McGinley said, there was a scene that called for a persistent, low-level gasoline smell. "Obviously, we couldn't just aerosolize gasoline." Even after he substituted a motor-oil smell formulated from slightly less explosive chemicals, it proved very difficult to get the odor to last long enough at a low enough level. "It was one of those smells

that very quickly became overpowering, but it also wasn't persistent," McGinley said. For that particular scent scene, he ended up having to design and build a custom "aeration bubbler," which pushed a steady stream of air through a scented liquid and then diffused it, laden with aromatic compounds, into the room.

Alongside smell-delivery systems, the team has developed an ever more refined sense of the narrative role that smell can play in a haunted house. "Initially, it was just bad smells," McGinley said. "By the second or third year, we began to wonder, O.K., what else can you do with smell that is disorientating or unexpected?" That year, there was a scene set in a nursery—"let's just say that unsettling things were going on," McGinley said, when I asked for more detail—and the team added the smell of baby powder at the entrance, hoping to trigger the warm and fuzzy associations that visitors might have with that scent, to lull them into a false sense of security.

Egner's personal favorite haunted scent experience was another bait-and-switch scene: as visitors approached a dimly lit table, they could smell roast turkey, mashed potatoes, and stuffing, and see dishes piled high with food—which turned out, on closer inspection, to be cured hog guts and other viscera. "I'm sure that we ruined somebody's Thanksgiving that year," Egner told me gleefully.

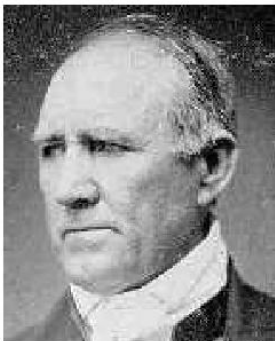
The Soap Factory does make visitors sign a waiver before they enter the Haunted Basement. "It's intense," Egner said, adding that, most years, one or two patrons vomit during their visit (requiring a sanitary cleanup and adding an extra layer to the smellscape). McGinley admitted that he himself hasn't always seen the basement in action. "It's not the smell—it's the other stuff that freaks me out," he said. But the only time that a smell has been toned down midseason was this year—and it was for the benefit of the staff rather than the visitors. "There's a really strong cat-urine smell this year, and it is really sticking with us," Egner said. "Our clothes, our hair ... I have a dog, and he is very confused when I get home."

On August 3 and 4, 1850 a letter appeared in various newspapers throughout the United States detailing a sinister plot supposedly hatched by Southern conspirators to leave the Union and confederate with Mexico. According to the correspondent, who used three different pen-names ('Independent,' 'Veritas,' and 'Viator'), an influential Southern gentleman highly placed in the American government had travelled incognito to Mexico earlier that year in April. This gentleman had then contacted Mexican officials to whom he had proposed a plan whereby the South would leave the Union and join together with Mexico. The capital of the proposed new nation was to be Mexico City.

Supposedly the Mexican foreign minister had welcomed the offer, and the British charge d'affaires in Mexico City had also encouraged it. However, the Mexican cabinet had rejected the offer. Thereupon, the Southern emissary had departed from Mexico and travelled to California.

The correspondent concluded his letter by demanding that Congress investigate this treasonous affair.

A second letter from this same correspondent appeared in papers four days later explaining that he knew about the plot because he had been shown incriminating diplomatic papers by a government official. However, he had been forbidden to reveal who had informed the government of the plot.



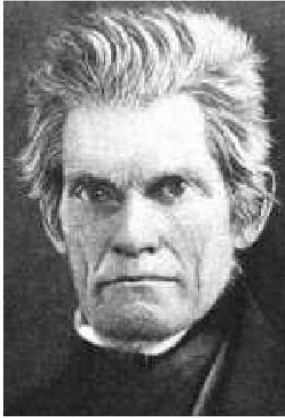
Sam Houston

On August 6 a letter from a second correspondent, who called himself 'Henrico,' appeared in the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* further elaborating on the plot. According to Henrico, details of the plot had been shown to Senator Sam Houston the previous winter, and Houston had been promised the presidency or dictatorship of the new confederation if he agreed to it. In addition, the conspirators were apparently planning to coerce Mexico into accepting their agreement by threatening to incite revolts in its frontier provinces unless it agreed. However, even with this threat, Mexican officials had still rejected the offer. They had realized that uniting with the South would not only mean

the spread of slavery throughout Mexico, it would also mean running the risk of being absorbed into the U.S. if the North later declared war on the South.

A few days later a third correspondent, who called himself 'Scrutator,' began submitting a series of letters about the issue to the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Scrutator claimed that John Calhoun, the famous South Carolina firebrand who had once been Andrew Jackson's vice-President, had originally conceived the plan. Calhoun, however, had recently died, thus leaving the enactment of his plan to others. Scrutator then demanded that Houston reveal the contents of the treasonable papers he had seen.

On August 15 the issue came to a head when portions of Scrutator's letter were read in the U.S. Senate, and Houston was challenged to reveal whatever he knew about the issue.



John C. Calhoun

Houston denied having any knowledge of such a plot.

A new letter from Scrutator appeared a few days later saying that he had visited Houston following the confrontation in the Senate, and that Houston had privately admitted that he had heard details of a vaguely similar plot a long time ago. However, the plot had never been anything more than a wild speculation. Nevertheless, Scrutator suspected that Houston was hiding something and demanded that he reveal the whole scheme. Scrutator continued to pen more letters demanding that Houston reveal whatever he knew, but Houston never cooperated and publicly denied any knowledge of such a plot.

Meanwhile public opinion in the North was split about whether there really was a Southern plot to confederate with Mexico. A correspondent for the *Pittsburgh Gazette* wrote a letter in which he claimed to know who the treasonous Southern emissary was supposed to have been. The emissary was supposedly Robert Greenhow, a State Department employee and a close friend of Calhoun. Greenhow and his wife Rose O'Neal were well-known figures in Washington social circles, and Greenhow had actually been in Mexico in April. He had been sent there to gather information from Mexican archives about California land claims which had become extremely confused during the recent gold rush. However, the correspondent for the *Pittsburgh Gazette* ridiculed the idea that Greenhow had participated in any plot.

Southern papers, of course, dismissed the idea of such a plot out of hand, and when no more news about the conspiracy surfaced, public interest in the affair gradually waned in both the North and South.

Did the South offer to confederate with Mexico in 1850, or was the entire story a hoax? The historian Mark Stegmaier recently investigated the issue and determined that it was a hoax.

Stegmaier found that Greenhow had been in Mexico until late October, 1850, at which point he had gone to California where he established a law practice in San Francisco. Greenhow died in 1854, but during the Civil War his wife, Rose O'Neal, became a famous Confederate spy. This indicates that Greenhow would certainly have had the connections and the opportunity to commit such a plot. However, Stegmaier points out that there was nothing surreptitious about Greenhow's trip to Mexico. It was fully sanctioned by the State Department.

More importantly, no mention of such a plot appears in either U.S. nor Mexican diplomatic records from the period. Given that the plot involved such high-level treason, if anything had occurred it would almost certainly have been mentioned somewhere in these records.

Stegmaier theorizes that some American official forged incriminating evidence which he then showed to political correspondents in Washington, who unquestioningly accepted the evidence as real, being eager for a sensational story.

Stegmaier points out that the news of the plot appeared in papers days after the defeat in

Congress of the Omnibus Bill. The Omnibus Bill was an attempt to reach a compromise between the Northern and Southern states whereby the contentious issue of the expansion of slavery into the Western territories could be peaceably resolved. Radicals in both the North and the South were glad that the bill had been defeated, but moderates had been horrified because they feared the approach of sectional conflict.

It is likely that one of these moderates invented the story of the plot, and then leaked it to reporters as a way to scare the public about the possibility of disunion, and thus gain support for the effort to get the pieces of the Omnibus bill approved individually.

Of course, Southern radicals definitely were dreaming of such treasonous schemes by 1850, but their schemes, at that point, largely existed only on paper. It appears highly doubtful any high-placed Southern government official, let alone Robert Greenhow, actually approached Mexican authorities to make a deal. Stegmaier concludes that the rumor of such a plot was simply "a manifestation of rampant public paranoia during the crisis of 1850."

- Stegmaier, Mark J. "Treachery Or Hoax? The Rumored Southern Conspiracy To Confederate With Mexico". *Civil War History* 1989 35(1): 28-38.

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Artwork accompanying Ross's 1979 article describing the Steps Experiment.

In 1975 Chuck Ross was selling cable TV door-to-door, and dreaming of becoming a writer. However, he felt the odds were stacked against him since the publishing industry seemed incapable of recognizing talent. To prove his theory, he typed up twenty-one pages of a highly acclaimed book and sent it unsolicited to four publishers (Random House, Houghton Mifflin, Doubleday, and Harcourt Brace Jovanovich), claiming it was his own work. The work he chose for this experiment was *Steps*, by Jerzy Kosinski. It had won the National Book Award for Fiction in 1969 and by 1975 had sold over 400,000 copies. All four publishers rejected the work, including Random House, who was its original publisher.

When Ross described this experiment in Harper's *Bookletter* (now defunct), his methodology was criticized. George Plimpton argued that his cover letter sounded too casual. (It started off with "Hello.") Kosinski himself argued that Ross should have typed and sent the entire manuscript. He wrote, "It [*Steps*] depends very much on cumulative effect. I can see myself rejecting it... It would have been much more interesting if he had submitted the whole work... I've never submitted a fragment of my work to anyone."

To address this criticism, Ross repeated the experiment in 1979. This time he submitted the entire book to fourteen publishers (the original four plus The Atlantic Monthly Press; Farrar, Straus & Giroux; Harper & Row; Alfred A. Knopf; Seymour Lawrence; David McKay; Macmillan; William Morrow; Prentice-Hall; and Viking). He also used the pseudonym Erik Demos, in case someone recognized his name from the earlier experiment.

Again, every publisher rejected the work. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, publisher of Kosinski's *Being There*, commented, "While your prose style is very lucid, the content of the book didn't inspire the level of enthusiasm here that a publisher should have for any book on their list in order to do well by it." Houghton Mifflin, publisher of Kosinski's *The Painted Bird*, wrote:

Several of us read your untitled novel here with admiration for writing and style. Jerzy Kosinski comes to mind as a point of comparison when reading the stark, chilly episodic incidents you have set down. The drawback to the manuscript, as it stands, is that it doesn't add up to a satisfactory whole. It has some very impressive moments, but gives the impression of sketchiness and incompleteness.

Ross commented that, "Evidently, Kosinski is not as good as Kosinski when Demos is the name on the envelope."

Next Ross sent queries to twenty-six literary agents. Again, no agent offered to represent

him. Ross wrote that, "no one, neither publishers nor agents, recognized Kosinski's already published book. Even more disappointing was the fact that no one thought it deserved to see print."

Controversy

Some have criticized Ross's choice of *Steps*, suggesting that it is easy to understand how publishers could have rejected it. M.A.Orthofer has written,

Steps is a different beast from *The Painted Bird*. It won the National Book Award -- controversially, one might add, with many considering it a make-up prize for the previously overlooked *The Painted Bird* -- and it sold well. It may be of literary merit, it may have won a prestigious prize, many people may have bought it and a considerable number might even have read it, but it made no impression. It is not a bad book, but it is entirely unremarkable. A book the world has remained oblivious to. Fairly, rightly so. It has been reduced to a curious aside, an occasional footnote, a bibliographic entry. It is already among the most-forgotten books of recent years, and it will fade further. And Chuck Ross' clever success rests on this particular quality of the book -- rests entirely on it, one could argue.

The Painted Bird belongs in another category entirely. It was more widely discussed, and far better known. It made Kosinski's reputation, and it remains the most significant of his texts. A number of his works are still in print, but this is the big one. The magnum opus, the one that's cited when he is mentioned. Ross' ruse would never have worked had he submitted *The Painted Bird*, retyped, in his experiment. Fake or real, it is a unique text. It made its mark. It was widely read, well received. It is a familiar, known novel. It stands out, in whatever guise it exists. Arguably even those that have not read the original would recognize it were it submitted under a different title and a different author's name. Not necessarily as *The Painted Bird*, but as an element of our common literary and humanistic experience, a fact which would be remarked upon and followed through until the connection with the original novel was made. In part this is due to the subject-matter, but *The Painted Bird* is also an accomplished and distinctive literary text (as none of Kosinski's other novels are -- though a number are quite interesting).

Perhaps *Steps* was an easy case. However, the same could not be said of Ross's next experiment, in which he submitted the script of *Casablanca* to 200 movie agents.

A final irony of the *Steps* experiment was that Kosinski was later accused of literary fraud. It was alleged that in writing his books he both relied on ghostwriters and extensively plagiarized from others.

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Nothing about this surprises me at all. I've often read books put out by the traditional publishers that in my opinion were poorly written. I've sometimes read these works and wondered if they'd ever even been seen by an editor due to the plethora of grammatical mistakes, misspellings, etc.

I also read a lot of stuff written by indie authors who finally decided to self-publish after finding themselves unable to win the approval of the publishing industry's arbitrary gatekeepers.

To be honest, about half of the self-published stuff I read is pretty bad. Often a good story idea, but that's about it. These books tend to be riddled with poor grammar, poor spelling, poor structure, etc. Fortunately, these books typically reveal themselves for what they are pretty darned quickly, so I don't waste too much time.

The other half however, in my opinion are a pleasure to read. Sure, I'll still find a few typos or grammar errors, or inconsistencies in the story, but really no more than the stuff I see in traditionally published works.

It's gotten to the point where just as a matter of principle, almost all of my book purchases lately are of those written by the indies. For the price of one book from a traditional publisher, I can pick up multiple books from indies. Even if 50% of them are pure crap, I'm still left with 50% of them that are potentially hidden gems.

I have no doubt that my opinion is strongly influenced by my personal experience. My wife has recently self-published a wonderful middle grade novel that has gotten great feedback from pretty much everyone who has read it and bothered to comment. For the most part, never could get the time of day from most agents or editors however. Well, her book is just great. Someday, hers will be a well-known name due to her writing. To all the agents and editors who blew their chance to work with her, I say "Too bad folks. Your loss. The ebook revolution has begun and you guys are on the wrong side of history. Ta ta."

Posted by drsam in Tonga on Fri Jun 01, 2012 at 10:19 PM

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The Tremendous Ride of Post Rider Israel Bissell

In 1775 Israel Bissell went much further, much faster, rode much longer, and was probably responsible for the muster of many, many more patriots than Paul Revere was.

"The bearer Israel Bissell is charged to alarm the country quite to Connecticut, and all persons are desired to furnish him with fresh horses, as they may be needed. I have spoken with several who have seen the dead and wounded at Lexington and Concord."

J. Palmer
One of the Committee of Safety

Such, in part, was the message given to Israel Bissell by Colonel Joseph Palmer, of Braintree in the Colony of Massachusetts on the morning of April 19th, 1775 shortly after the information filtered into the little towns surrounding Boston, of the confrontation between the King's regulars and the patriots. Bissell, one of the best post-riders in the colonies, was instructed to deliver the note to the communities of Marlboro and Worcester, and then turn southward towards Connecticut. His express duty was to alert the populace to the need for general mobilization.

Leaving Watertown, now a part of Boston, Bissell headed his noble horse in the direction of Marlboro and Worcester. He made the initial phase of his memorable ride in two hours, pulling up where Worcester City Hall now stands. The horse is said to have died of a heart attack from over-exertion, and after giving the message to the excited populace, the veteran horseman mounted a new steed and headed south.

He had been advised that on his way, he should make contact with a sterling patriot, a veteran of the French and Indian Wars and a legend in his own time, who lived near the tiny community of Pomfret, Connecticut, where he operated a big farm. His name was Israel Putnam.

Early on the morning of the twentieth, Bissell reined up his mount in front of his round-faced, burly namesake, to whom he excitedly related the events of the previous day. As Putnam walked across the fields back to his barn, and toward the start of a brilliant military career, Bissell turned toward the coast and the village of New London. With another fresh mount, Bissell spurred the animal along the dusty road, and it was sunset before he was to see the church spires of that little coastal town.

Then the exhausted rider was to undergo great frustration, for the New Londoners

insisted on Bissell making sworn testimony that what he said was true before they would accept the shocking news as fact. To fire on the King's troops was unthinkable. While sympathetic, the citizens needed more assurance.

Visit
The
Long

So it was the 21st before the Watertown native was able to head southward once more toward New Haven and New York town. Through the long and dusty day, Bissell followed the ancient Boston Post-Road, arriving in New Haven late in the afternoon, where he once more went through more of the exasperating delays that were to make his lengthy ride.

Riders' Guild! On the 22nd he stopped briefly at Fairfield, Connecticut, was given a fresh horse and headed on toward Manhattan and the seaport town of New York, a place he had often visited as a stage coach driver.

Past the Bowery, Bissell rode to the Common of the town, and halting on the Green, once more repeated the story that he had previously told to more than a dozen American communities.

It was Sunday now, and here and there a frown was seen on faces of some Gothamites, at the thought of anyone conducting such war-like business on the Sabbath. But, Sunday or not, Bissell got his message across, and headed his new horse on the last lap, the length of the present state of New Jersey.

As Bissell headed ever southward, four other men, also mounted, slipped out of New York, to alert the countryside in places that the Massachusetts patriot had not reached.

Passing Princeton College on the twenty-fourth, Bissell shouted to all and sundry what had happened on a little green up in Lexington. Again he was faced with the proof of identity, and more than once the tired rider was almost literally pulled from his mount. As always, he showed the now dog-eared message from Palmer, but again there were delays.

Through Trenton nothing was to deter him from reaching Philadelphia. From that point on fresh riders could be sent southward to warn Virginia.

On the 25th he entered the City of Brotherly Love [Philadelphia], and as he almost collapsed, he delivered the message for the last time.

Bissell had made the ride in slightly over five days, despite the countless delays. He had alerted thousands of troops through their various Committees. The Boston-Philadelphia stage always took six days to make the ride, with fresh horses awaiting at designated points and without the frequent hindrances that had confronted one of America's forgotten heroes.

From Philadelphia, - "for the good of our country, and welfare of our lives and liberties and fortunes, you will not lose a moment's time. We will send you momentous

intelligence, this moment received." With this message the further riders headed south, and Israel Bissell disappeared from the pages of American history, but his tremendous ride had a far-reaching impact upon the cause. Within days, hundreds of men, some uniformed and others in ragged clothing, marched along the same dusty roads toward seething Boston and some of the troops to whom Bissell had brought the famous message, were to perish behind the Bunker Hill parapets on June 17th.

He didn't mount his horse until a couple of days after [the famous] Paul Revere. He didn't have a dramatic midnight departure with lanterns and all. And since Bissell was not an easy name with which a poet could rhyme, Israel never became famous. But he did go much further, much faster, rode much longer, and was probably responsible for the muster of many, many more patriots than Revere was. And if saddle sores count, he's surely worthy of a posthumous Purple Heart!

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Herman Melville, circa 1860.
Photo: Wikipedia

In July of 1852, a 32-year-old novelist named Herman Melville had high hopes for his new novel, *Moby-Dick; or, The Whale*, despite the book's mixed reviews and tepid sales. That month he took a steamer to Nantucket for his first visit to the Massachusetts island, home port of his novel's mythic protagonist, Captain Ahab, and his ship, the *Pequod*. Like a tourist, Melville met local dignitaries, dined out and took in the sights of the village he had previously only imagined.

And on his last day on Nantucket he met the broken-down 60-year-old man who had captained the *Essex*, the ship that had been attacked and sunk by a sperm whale in an 1820 incident that had inspired Melville's novel. Captain George Pollard Jr. was just 29 years old when the *Essex* went down, and he survived and returned to Nantucket to captain a second whaling ship, *Two Brothers*. But when that ship wrecked on a coral reef two years later, the captain was marked as unlucky at sea—a "Jonah"—and no owner would trust a ship to him again. Pollard lived out his remaining years on land, as the village night watchman.



"Back jaws, like enormous shears, bit the craft completely in twain."
—Page 50.

Melville had written about Pollard briefly in *Moby-Dick*, and only with regard to the whale sinking his ship. During his visit, Melville later wrote, the two merely "exchanged some words." But Melville knew Pollard's ordeal at sea did not end with the sinking of the *Essex*, and he was not about to evoke the horrific memories that the captain surely carried with him. "To the islanders he was a nobody," Melville wrote, "to me, the most impressive man, tho' wholly unassuming, even humble—that I ever encountered."

Pollard had told the full story to fellow captains over a dinner shortly after his rescue from the *Essex* ordeal, and to a missionary named George Bennet. To Bennet, the tale was like a confession. Certainly, it was grim: 92 days and sleepless nights at sea in a leaking boat with no food, his surviving crew going mad beneath the unforgiving sun, eventual cannibalism and the harrowing fate of two teenage boys, including Pollard's first cousin, Owen Coffin. "But I can tell you no more—my head is on fire at the recollection," Pollard told the missionary. "I hardly know what I say."

The trouble for *Essex* began, as Melville knew, on August 14, 1819, just two days after it left Nantucket on a whaling voyage that was supposed to last two and a half years. The 87-foot-long ship was hit by a squall that destroyed its topgallant sail and nearly sank it. Still, Pollard continued, making it to Cape Horn five weeks later. But the 20-man crew found the waters off South America nearly fished out, so they decided to sail for distant whaling grounds in the South Pacific, far from any shores.

To restock, the *Essex* anchored at Charles Island in the Galapagos, where the crew collected

sixty 100-pound tortoises. As a prank, one of the crew set a fire, which, in the dry season, quickly spread. Pollard's men barely escaped, having to run through flames, and a day after they set sail, they could still see smoke from the burning island. Pollard was furious, and swore vengeance on whoever set the fire. Many years later Charles Island was still a blackened wasteland, and the fire was believed to have caused the extinction of both the Floreana Tortoise and the Floreana Mockingbird.



By November of 1820, after months of a prosperous voyage and a thousand miles from the nearest land, whaleboats from the *Essex* had harpooned whales that dragged them out toward the horizon in what the crew called "Nantucket sleigh rides." Owen Chase, the 23-year-old first mate, had stayed aboard the *Essex* to make repairs while Pollard went whaling. It was Chase who spotted a very big whale—85 feet in length, he estimated—lying quietly in the distance, its head facing the ship. Then, after two or three spouts, the giant made straight for the *Essex*, "coming down for us at great celerity," Chase would recall—at about three knots. The whale smashed head-on into the ship with "such an appalling and tremendous jar, as nearly threw us all on our faces."

The whale passed underneath the ship and began thrashing in the water. "I could distinctly see him smite his jaws together, as if distracted with rage and fury," Chase recalled. Then the whale disappeared. The crew was addressing the hole in the ship and getting the pumps working when one man cried out, "Here he is—he is making for us again." Chase spotted the whale, his head half out of water, bearing down at great speed—this time at six knots, Chase thought. This time it hit the bow directly under the cathead and disappeared for good.

The water rushed into the ship so fast, the only thing the crew could do was lower the boats and try fill them with navigational instruments, bread, water and supplies before the *Essex* turned over on its side.

Pollard saw his ship in distress from a distance, then returned to see the *Essex* in ruin. Dumbfounded, he asked, "My God, Mr. Chase, what is the matter?"

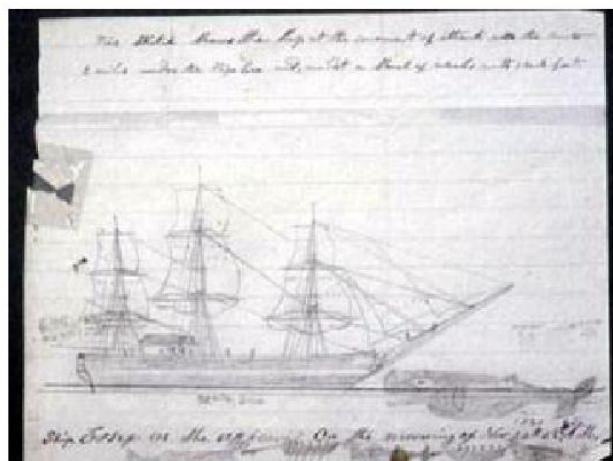
"We have been stove by a whale," his first mate answered.

Another boat returned, and the men sat in silence, their captain still pale and speechless. Some, Chase observed, "had no idea of the extent of their deplorable situation."

The men were unwilling to leave the doomed *Essex* as it slowly foundered, and Pollard tried to come up with a plan. In all, there were three boats and 20 men. They calculated that the closest land was the Marquesas Islands and the Society Islands, and Pollard wanted to set off for them—but in one of the most ironic decisions in nautical history, Chase and the crew convinced him that those islands were peopled with cannibals and that the crew's best chance for survival would be to sail south. The distance to land would be far greater, but they might catch the trade winds or be spotted by another whaling ship. Only Pollard seemed to understand the implications of steering clear of the islands. (According to Nathaniel Philbrick,

in his book *In the Heart of the Sea: The Tragedy of the Whaleship Essex*, although rumors of cannibalism persisted, traders had been visiting the islands without incident.)

Thus they left the *Essex* aboard their 20-foot boats. They were challenged almost from the start. Saltwater saturated the bread, and the men began to dehydrate as they ate their daily rations. The sun was ravaging. Pollard's boat was attacked by a killer whale. They spotted land—Henderson Island—two weeks later, but it was barren. After another week the men began to run out of supplies. Still, three of them decided they'd rather take their chances on land than climb back into a boat. No one could blame them. And besides, it would stretch the provisions for the men in the boats.



By mid-December, after weeks at sea, the boats began to take on water, more whales menaced the men at night, and by January, the paltry rations began to take their toll. On Chase's boat, one man went mad, stood up and demanded a dinner napkin and water, then fell into "most horrid and frightful convulsions" before perishing the next morning. "Humanity must shudder at the dreadful recital" of what came next, Chase wrote. The crew "separated limbs from his body, and cut all the flesh from the bones; after which, we opened the body, took out the heart, and then closed it again—

sewed it up as decently as we could, and committed it to the sea." They then roasted the man's organs on a flat stone and ate them.

Over the coming week, three more sailors died, and their bodies were cooked and eaten. One boat disappeared, and then Chase's and Pollard's boats lost sight of each other. The rations of human flesh did not last long, and the more the survivors ate, the hungrier they felt. On both boats the men became too weak to talk. The four men on Pollard's boat reasoned that without more food, they would die. On February 6, 1821—nine weeks after they'd bidden farewell to the *Essex*—Charles Ramsdell, a teenager, proposed they draw lots to determine who would be eaten next. It was the custom of the sea, dating back, at least in recorded instance, to the first half of the 17th century. The men in Pollard's boat accepted Ramsdell's suggestion, and the lot fell to young Owen Coffin, the captain's first cousin.

Pollard had promised the boy's mother he'd look out for him. "My lad, my lad!" the captain now shouted, "if you don't like your lot, I'll shoot the first man that touches you." Pollard even offered to step in for the boy, but Coffin would have none of it. "I like it as well as any other," he said.

Ramsdell drew the lot that required him to shoot his friend. He paused a long time. But then Coffin rested his head on the boat's gunwale and Ramsdell pulled the trigger.

"He was soon dispatched," Pollard would say, "and nothing of him left."

By February 18, after 89 days at sea, the last three men on Chase's boat spotted a sail in the distance. After a frantic chase, they managed to catch the English ship *Indian* and were rescued.

Three hundred miles away, Pollard's boat carried only its captain and Charles Ramsdell. They had only the bones of the last crewmen to perish, which they smashed on the bottom of the boat so that they could eat the marrow. As the days passed the two men obsessed over the bones scattered on the boat's floor. Almost a week after Chase and his men had been rescued, a crewman aboard the American ship *Dauphin* spotted Pollard's boat. Wretched and confused, Pollard and Ramsdell did not rejoice at their rescue, but simply turned to the bottom of their boat and stuffed bones into their pockets. Safely aboard the *Dauphin*, the two delirious men were seen "sucking the bones of their dead mess mates, which they were loath to part with."

The five *Essex* survivors were reunited in Valparaiso, where they recuperated before sailing back for Nantucket. As Philbrick writes, Pollard had recovered enough to join several captains for dinner, and he told them the entire story of the *Essex* wreck and his three harrowing months at sea. One of the captains present returned to his room and wrote everything down, calling Pollard's account "the most distressing narrative that ever came to my knowledge."

Years later, the third boat was discovered on Ducie Island; three skeletons were aboard. Miraculously, the three men who chose to stay on Henderson Island survived for nearly four months, mostly on shellfish and bird eggs, until an Australian ship rescued them.

Once they arrived in Nantucket, the surviving crewmen of the *Essex* were welcomed, largely without judgment. Cannibalism in the most dire of circumstances, it was reasoned, was a custom of the sea. (In similar incidents, survivors declined to eat the flesh of the dead but used it as bait for fish. But Philbrick notes that the men of the *Essex* were in waters largely devoid of marine life at the surface.)

Captain Pollard, however, was not as easily forgiven, because he had eaten his cousin. (One scholar later referred to the act as "gastronomic incest.") Owen Coffin's mother could not abide being in the captain's presence. Once his days at sea were over, Pollard spent the rest of his life in Nantucket. Once a year, on the anniversary of the wreck of the *Essex*, he was said to have locked himself in his room and fasted in honor of his lost crewmen.

By 1852, Melville and *Moby-Dick* had begun their own slide into obscurity. Despite the author's hopes, his book sold but a few thousand copies in his lifetime, and Melville, after a few more failed attempts at novels, settled into a reclusive life and spent 19 years as a customs inspector in New York City. He drank and suffered the death of his two sons. Depressed, he abandoned novels for poetry. But George Pollard's fate was never far from his mind. In his poem *Clarel* he writes of

A night patrolman on the quay

Watching the bales till morning hour

*Through fair and foul. Never he smiled;
Call him, and he would come; not sour
In spirit, but meek and reconciled:
Patient he was, he none withstood;
Oft on some secret thing would brood.*

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In 1935 veterans of World War One lobbied Congress to pay them their war bonuses ten years early in order to ease the economic hardship they were experiencing during the Great Depression. Congress readily acquiesced and passed the Harrison Bonus Bill in January 1936.

This pre-payment was a source of inspiration for Lewis Gorin, a senior at Princeton University. It seemed logical to him that if present-day veterans could get their war bonuses early, why shouldn't *future* veterans also receive their money up-front — before they had fought in a war. After all, given the global political situation, it seemed inevitable to Gorin that all the young men in the country would soon have to go off to fight. Why shouldn't these future veterans be given their money now, while they could still enjoy it, instead of having to wait until after the conflict, when they might be dead?

The Veterans of Future Wars is Formed



Gorin and friends recreate the beginning of the Veterans of Future Wars

news clip viewable at time.com

While attending a tea party at the Terrace Club in March 1936, Gorin shared his idea with his friend, Thomas Riggs Jr. Immediately the two of them decided to found an organization to promote the cause of

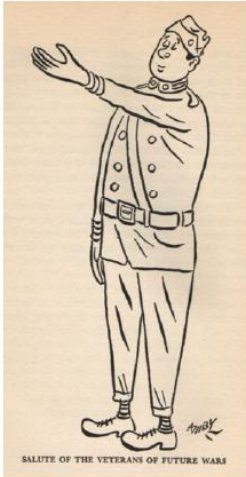
future veterans. Thus the Veterans of Future Wars was born. A few days later the manifesto of their organization appeared in the *Daily Princetonian*. It read:

Whereas it is inevitable that this country will be engaged in war within the next thirty years, and whereas it is by all accounts likely that every man of military age will have a part in this war,

We, therefore, demand that the Government make known its intention to pay an adjusted service compensation, sometimes called a bonus, of \$1,000 to every male citizen between the ages of 18 and 36, said bonus to be payable the first of June, 1965. Furthermore, we believe a study of history demonstrates that it is customary to pay all bonuses before they are due. Therefore we demand immediate cash payment, plus three per cent interest compounded annually and retroactively from the first of June, 1965, to the first of June, 1935. It is but common right that this bonus be paid now, for many will be killed or wounded in the next war, and hence they, the most deserving, will not otherwise get the full benefit of their country's gratitude.

The Movement Spreads

Wire services picked up the manifesto, spread it nationwide, and soon local chapters of the Veterans of Future Wars began popping up at campuses throughout the nation. Enthusiastic new members from as far away as North Dakota paid dues to the main chapter in Princeton and adopted the organization's salute: arm held out towards Washington with "hand outstretched, palm up and expectant" (a mockery of the fascist salute then gaining currency in Europe). At its peak, in June 1936, the Veterans of Future Wars had over 50,000 paid-up members.



Spin-offs of the organization began to appear. The women of Vassar College started an auxiliary called the "Association of Gold Star Mothers of Future Veterans" (after the Gold Star Mothers) and demanded that Congress send them to France to view "the future burying ground of our dead" (the real Gold Star Mothers had been sent to France to view the graves of their sons). But in the face of withering public outcry (how could anyone make fun of the Gold Star Mothers?) the women of Vassar lost their nerve and changed the name of their organization to the much tamer "Home Fire Division."



'Commander' Gorin on the steps of Nassau Hall, Princeton giving a pep talk to members of the Veterans of Future Wars

The students of Rensselaer

Polytechnic formed the "Future Profiteers of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute" and demanded that the military pay them early for war contracts they would complete in the future. At Rutgers the "Association of Future War Propagandists" appeared, while at City College of New York the "Foreign Correspondents of Future Wars" requested "training courses for members of the association in the writing of atrocity stories and garbled war dispatches for patriotic purposes." Probably the most forthright spin-off of all was the "Future Gold Diggers of Sweetbriar College."

What was the message?



A Regional Commander salutes his fellow future veterans, "hand outstretched, palm up and expectant"

In its original formulation, the Veterans of Future Wars was as much about satirizing government largesse as it was about lampooning the sabre-rattling of those urging war with Germany. But as it spread

nationwide, the anti-war side of the concept quickly came to dominate.

One correspondent to *Time* Magazine articulated the anti-war appeal of the Veterans of Future Wars in this way: "It's a 20th Century 'Don Quixote' packed with the dynamite of 'war babies' turning the guns of ridicule on the goose-stepping, gun-toting generation which splashed through the biggest blood-bath in history — and emerged crying for more" (*Time*, April 6, 1936).

The Chicago University chapter of the V.F.W. came up with the slogan: "We'll make the world safe for hypocrisy" (mocking the phrase, "making the world safe for democracy.") And during one parade, V.F.W.'s carried death's-heads and crutches.



Future veterans march in New York down Broadway, past Columbia University

Controversy

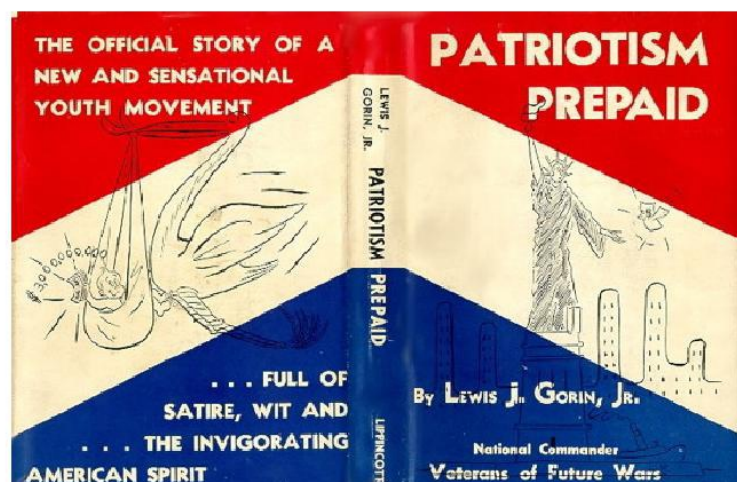
Many real veterans disliked the movement. National Commander James E. Van Zandt of the Veterans of Foreign Wars sneered, "They're too yellow to go to war... They'll never be veterans of a future war." Representative Fuller of Arkansas got up in Congress to declare that "Such organizations are unworthy

of public notice and should be denounced by every true American." Maj. Gen. Amos A. Fries, retired, denounced it as "just a damned fool idea."

However, there were also some voices of support from those in power. Eleanor Roosevelt said, "I think it's just as funny as it can be! And -- taken light, as it should be -- a grand pricking of lots of bubbles." Though she also cautioned that, if it were taken too far, it might "hurt some feelings."

The End of the Movement

The movement continued on throughout 1936, with Gorin publishing a book, *Patriotism Prepaid*, in which he elaborated on the VFW concept. However, by 1937 the joke had run its course, and the 584 nationwide chapters of the Veterans of Future Wars began to disband. The movement officially ended in April, 1937. The officers wrote an "obituary" of the organization, stating they had achieved their objectives by awakening the country to "the absurdity of war" and to the "equal absurdity of the Treasury exploitation in which the various veterans organizations had been allowed to indulge."



There was a brief effort to revive the movement in 1950 at the start of the Korean War, but by then the joke had lost its freshness and went nowhere.

In 2003 an online version of the organization appeared, with a website at vofw.org. The authors of this website claimed that the new organization represented all those soldiers who would, in the future, fight

wars in the following countries scheduled to be invaded: Afghanistan (2002), Iraq (2003), North Korea (2004), Iran (2005), Libya (2006), Somalia (2007), Syria (2008), Yemen (2009), Indonesia (2010), China (2011), Japan (2012), Germany (2013), France (2013), Australia (2014), Mexico (2015), Canada (2016), and California (2017).

True To Its Name

In the most fitting rebuke to those who had questioned their patriotism, all of the original Princeton members of the Veterans of Future Wars, except two, served in World War Two. Of the two who did not serve, one was injured in an automobile accident, and the other worked in an essential industry (steel). The two founders of the VFW, Gorin and Riggs, both served abroad.

- "Future Veterans". *Time*. March 30, 1936: 38.
- "Future Veterans Amuse First Lady." (April 3, 1936). *The Washington Post*.
- "As Time Goes By." (July 26, 1943). *Time Magazine*.

To receive Hoax Museum blog posts by email, enter your email address:
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City's Largest Ever Mass Casualty Drill is Today | News Radio 1200 WOAI

Posted Wednesday, October 22nd 2014 @ 3pm by Morgan Montalvo

woai.com

More than 50 San Antonio-area hospitals and first-response agencies are being put to the test today as participants in an annual mass casualty drill organized by the Southwest Texas Regional Advisory Council, WOAI's Morgan Montalvo reports.

This year's exercise includes approximately 600 mock victims, portrayed by students from nursing, technical and vocational schools, and about 200 emergency medical, law enforcement and support personnel, says Mark Montgomery, STRAC's director of emergency preparedness and response.

"What we'll do is 'surge' all of the entities that want to take part with acute-care 'patients,' " Montgomery says. "Some of them will ride on an ambulance, some will ride in an ambulance bus so they get to experience it from the other side and see how a real-life patient goes through the system."

Many of the "victims" will be "moulaged" -- treated with movie-style makeup to simulate a wide range of injuries and realism to the simulation. Dozens of volunteer artists trained last month by the UT health Science Center-San Antonio will apply the artificial wounds.

Montgomery says today's activity consists of two parts: a mass vehicle injury incident that will overlap with an aircraft mishap at the San Antonio International Airport. The airport portion of the exercise allows the City of San Antonio Aviation department to comply with a triennial emergency drill requirement. Hospitals, Montgomery says, must take part in yearly exercises.

A critical component of the simulation is the participation of nearby rural hospitals that will accept and treat mock victims from the multiple-automobile crash scenario.

"We're forcing their emergency rooms to take a large number of patients," Montgomery says, "and make sure they can accept them in a short period of time."

He says a large influx of patients is a regular event for many small-town medical centers, which often deal with multiple victims "on a foggy night when there's not an aircraft available." Motorists should not expect to see a larger-than-normal number of emergency vehicles, particularly ambulances, on area roads "because we don't want to affect real-time response" for genuine emergencies. Instead most mock victims will be bused to emergency rooms and treatment centers according to their assigned levels of "injury."

Montgomery says while some coordination aspects of the drill began last evening, the "critical incident" portion of the activity begins at 9 a.m. and should conclude by early afternoon. He says in the event of a real mass-casualty incident San Antonio, with its two Level One Trauma facilities -- San Antonio Military Medical Center and University Hospital -- is well prepared to deal with a large influx of patients.

About six months of planning goes into each exercise with the real credit, according to Montgomery, going to participating facilities and agencies, and large-scale support from area student volunteers, all of whom are helping make San Antonio "the national model for trauma systems and patient care."

"There's a lot of almost theatrical work, almost stage-managing, to make sure that on Game Day, all of the pieces are in place," Montgomery says.

For more information on the city's mass casualty drill, click on www.strac.org. Social media fans can follow the drill on Twitter by searching #samcee2014.

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Sacrificial goat falls from apartment building, killing 13-year-old

Callum Paton
Tuesday 07 October 2014

independent.co.uk

A Turkish boy has been killed in a tragic accident after a sacrificial goat jumped off the roof of his nearby apartment building, landing on him in the street below.

Heval Yildirim was playing with his friends during this weekend's Eid al-Adha festival when the accident occurred, the *Daily Mirror* reported.

Heval's father Mehmet brought the goat and stored it on the roof because there was not enough room in their apartment.

He told police that the terrified animal had vaulted the fence of its small roof enclosure before it fell.

Heval was taken to hospital but pronounced dead on arrival.

"I am devastated but what more can I say? In fact there is nothing at all to say. Even the prosecutor has said this incident could be the first of its kind around the world," Mehmet Yildirim was quoted as saying.

The state prosecutor has described the case as "unprecedented".

The slaughtering of a goat, sheep or other sacrificial animal is integral to the Muslim feast of Eid al-Adha. Hundreds of thousands of animals will have been killed and then specially prepared for the festival which took place on Saturday.

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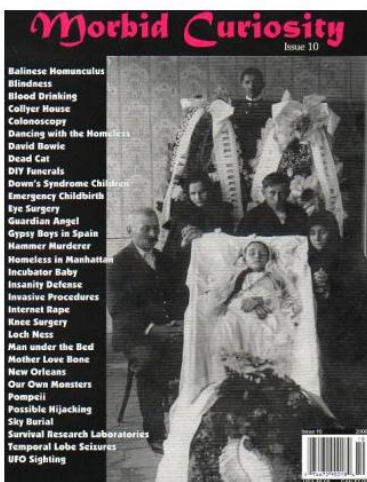
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You think you're spooky? San Francisco author Loren Rhoads — former editor of gruesomely entertaining true-tales magazine *Morbid Curiosity* — visits cemeteries for fun. Just in time for Halloween, we quizzed her about her macabre life touring graveyards.

Photo of St. John's Cemetery by Loren Rhoads

io9: The first issue of *Morbid Curiosity* came out in 1997. What inspired you to start the magazine?

Loren Rhoads: When [my husband, Mason Jones, and I] first moved to San Francisco, we hooked up with the RE/Search Publications people right away. They were doing all this cool stuff, and it was just two people in an apartment. It seemed really manageable. You didn't need to have a big office, or publishing house, or anything. We tried publishing a couple of books, and my husband started a Japanese music magazine called *Ongaku Otaku*. He kept getting all this cool stuff in the mail, and I was like, "I wanna get cool stuff in the mail, too! What kind of magazine do I need to publish to do that?" And I wanted to get people to tell me their deep, dark, secrets. So I made *Morbid Curiosity*. [Note: if you missed the mag, which ceased publication in 2006, check out anthology *Morbid Curiosity Cures the Blues*.]



Expand

Were you always morbidly curious, so to speak?

I grew up on a farm, so things were dying all the time [around me]. My mom was a city girl, and at first she was like, "Let's go out and name all the animals!" and we got really attached to them. That lasted, like, one season. After that, it was just kind of easy come, easy go.

How did you get into cemetery travel?

I started visiting cemeteries totally by accident. We were flying to Barcelona for a Survival Research Labs show, but it was right when the first Gulf War was ramping up [in 1991], and we missed our connection. We were re-routed through London right when the US started bombing Baghdad, so we decided we'd stay [until it was safe to travel again]. It was a nightmare. But while we were in London with no guidebooks or plans or anything, we stumbled upon this gorgeous picture book of

Highgate Cemetery. We decided to visit it, and it was really beautiful and overgrown — they shot some of the Dracula movies there in the 1970s — and I kind of fell in love.

And then, the second half of our trip was always to go to Paris. So we went to Père Lachaise to see Oscar Wilde. And that was it! Totally smitten. And now I do this website, Cemetery Travel, where the goal is to get people to visit cemeteries, either in their local communities or on vacation.

Do you plan trips around cemeteries that you want to visit?

It's a combination of that and "I'm gonna be in Toronto anyway, what should I go see while I'm there?" Portland was the last big trip I did. There's a really beautiful graveyard there, [Lone Fir Cemetery].



Expand

Your guidebook, *Wish You Were Here: Adventures in Cemetery Travel*, recommends resting places of the famous, but also graveyards that are notable for other reasons, like setting, history, or particularly striking examples of sculpture. How do you find out about the off-the-beaten-path ones?

When I go someplace, I've gotten fairly bold about asking people, "Do you know of any cool graveyards?" Half the time, people recoil in horror, but other times, they're like, "Oh yes! My grandmother is buried in this gorgeous place, and you should go." We were in Niagara Falls last summer, in one of the tourist restaurants, and asked if anyone there knew anything about graveyards. So they got this guy out of the kitchen who was Niagara Falls native, who told us about [Drummond Hill Cemetery], which was a battleground in the War of 1812. I never would have found it if I hadn't asked.

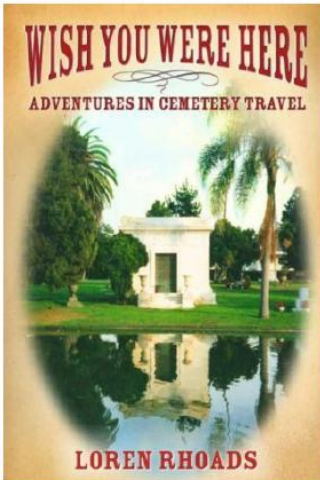
Do you have a favorite?

That's like picking my favorite kid! [Laughs.] It changes day by day. I prefer cemeteries that have flowers, and greenery — I like them to feel kind of lively, with squirrels and birds and people going through. I've been in graveyards that are broken, and the stones are all worn, and that makes me sad. I think it's important to visit those, too, and draw attention to them. But I'd rather see a garden, I guess.

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It's interesting that you live in San Francisco, since most of the city's cemeteries were moved out of town in the 1940s.

Well, they keep finding them. San Francisco's not that old, so I don't know how you could



forget where the cemeteries used to be. But it seems like every time they open a hole someplace, there's another graveyard!

Loren Rhoads is also the editor of fiction, poetry, and non-fiction collection The Haunted Mansion Project: Year Two; co-author (with Brian Thomas) of fantasy novel As Above, So Below; and is working on a space-opera trilogy. The first book, The Dangerous Type, will be released in 2015. Author photo by Mason Jones.

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Take A Tour Of An Abandoned Underground Cold War Missile Base

2014-10-28

businessinsider.com



In 1960, during the height of the Cold War, the US Air Force introduced the Titan I, its first series of multi-stage Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles. Along with the Atlas missile program, they became an integral part of the US's nuclear deterrent against the Soviet Union.

The Titan-I and the machinery and crew needed to launch them were housed in massive underground silos connected by thousands of feet of tunnels. Missile bases were built all over the United States, costing the US government millions.



But by 1965, the Titan-I's and their bases were all but abandoned, phased out in favor of newer and more advanced missiles.

A few Titan-I bases still remain intact, buried reminders of some of the most dangerous years of the Cold War.

Urban explorer and photographer Amy Heiden gained access to one of them, once part of Beale Air Force Base, in Chico, California, and documented the sprawling 1960s nuclear base lurking just below the earth's surface.



Amy Heiden

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KEYSINFONETOctober 11, 2014

2014-10-11T13:44:10Z

A woman staying at a Key West resort was bitten by an iguana there Wednesday night, but the reptile nipped her toe because she harassed the iguana to the point of angering it, according to a city Police Department report.

It's not clear who called police to the Coconut Mallory Resort at 1445 N. Roosevelt Blvd., but Amy Russell, 39, reportedly from Alabama, told police the iguana bit her toe and she feared contracting salmonella.

Most iguanas are wild and the resort doesn't own the "bright green medium-sized iguana," Officer Brenda Sellers wrote in her report. Also, iguanas generally stay away from humans and rarely bite.

Sellers wrote in her report that Russell, upon showing her toe with "bright red toenail polish," "was squeezing her toe like she was trying to make it look red." But the officer wrote "no injury was visible."

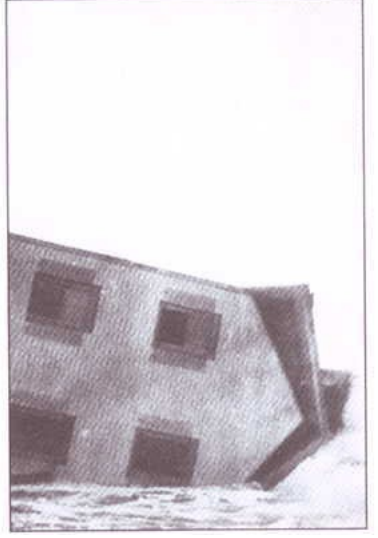
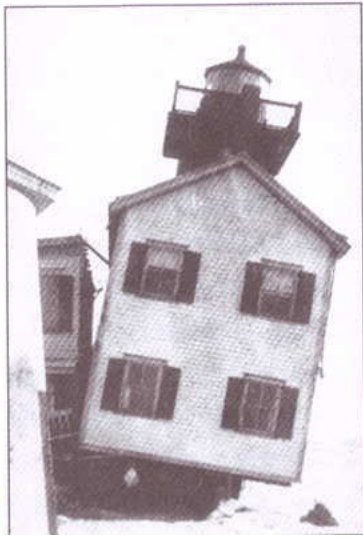
Two other women at the resort told Sellers that Russell was "pushing her foot toward the iguana, antagonizing it." Sure enough, a video taken of the alleged poolside attack shows her "repeatedly shoving her foot towards" the animal to the point where the iguana wrapped its mouth around her toe.

The iguana wasn't charged.

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In 1927, a horrific storm swept across the rapidly depleting beaches of the Jersey Shore and began the end of New Jersey's first shore resort, Tucker's Island. Located at the southern tip of Long Beach Island all that remains of Tucker's Island is a shoal and a legend about an old pirate cutlass.

During the prime of Tucker's Island the town was bustling with year round residents, summer tourism and according to local legends, at least one buried treasure! Yes! I said it, buried treasure! Now while most pirate lore comes with no real ground to stand on, in this case we have a piece of physical evidence that I have seen myself and I would recommend the trip to anyone who has a love for history, pirates, adventure, or a little bit of each.

One night two men came ashore Tucker's Island and approached the Life Saving Station. They asked the guards there where they could find a local landmark, two old cedar trees, and because they could think of no reason to object the locals pointed the men in the direction of the trees and then watched as the two disappeared back into their boat. Hours later, under the cover of darkness, the men came back ashore and headed in the direction of the trees. Not long after they disappeared, the men at the Life Saving Station saw them reemerge from the darkness carrying a very large bundle. They were uncertain as to the nature of the bundle and they raised the alarm in fear that it would be stolen goods or, worse yet, a dead body. The men hurried to their boat while being pursued by the locals and just as they thought there was no hope, they loaded their bundle into the boat and pushed off leaving those who chased them standing on the beach.

The locals gathered together and headed back toward the cedars in search of clues to what the two men had been doing and what they found shocked them. There by the trees was a hole in the ground and next to the hole a large trunk that had been opened and emptied of its contents. All that was left behind was a scattering of old Spanish coins, a beaten and faded map, and an old rusted cutlass from a past forgotten. Now all that remains is the cutlass which can be seen at the Long Beach Island Historical Association in Beach Haven, New Jersey.

I recommend a trip to the Historical Association to anyone with a little curiosity about LBI's past. It was different and interesting and it gave me hope that I may still find some buried treasure somewhere.

Tuna caught with sailfish bill protruding from its head

October 22, 2014

news.com.au

Northern Territory



This tunicorn was just like a dogtooth tuna - but with a large horn protruding from its head. Picture: Kim Haskell
Source: Supplied

A north Australian fisho got the shock of his life when he reeled in a tunicorn - a tuna with a large horn protruding from the centre of its forehead.

Angler Kim Haskell said it was one of the strangest sights he's seen in his years fishing.

Mr Haskell said he was fishing with friends near Osprey Reef, out of Cooktown Queensland, when they made the surprising capture.

"Out there everything is bigger, the fish are bigger, it's all bigger, you're so far out you feel like you're in outer space," he said.

GIANT GROPER NEARLY FLIPS BOAT

As he pulled in the large dogtooth tuna the group noticed there was something unusual about it.



The fish appeared to have completely recovered from the injury. Picture: Kim Haskell
Source: Supplied

"We could see a funny looking thing sticking out of its head, we didn't gaff it we got a few people and swung it up on-board.

"When we got it on-board we couldn't believe it."

Mr Haskell said the tuna had a 40cm sailfish bill protruding from its head like a horn, much like an aquatic equivalent of the legendary

horse-like unicorn.

The anglers theorise that the fish must have narrowly escaped an attack from a hungry sailfish at some point.

"It (the bill) must have snapped off in its skull, it missed the brain and missed the blood vessels and healed over.

"We extracted the thing, it didn't bleed much, then we released it."

But it wasn't the tuna's lucky day.

"It swam off but we saw four sharks eat it."

Mr Haskell's brother sent a picture of the possibly magical fish to the popular ABC radio fishing program Tales From The Tinny.

The out-there catch wasn't the only bizarre thing Mr Haskell has caught in his years throwing a line.

"I caught a trout recently and it spewed up a cod, and the cod was still alive, it must have just eaten it when it bit my line,

"Then the cod spewed up a little fish - we put the cod back and it swam away."

Originally published as Angler reels in mythical unicorn

17 October 2014 Last updated at 09:04 ET
UAE: Man divorces wife 'possessed by genie'

By News from Elsewhere
<http://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-news-from-elsewhere-29659199>

A court in Dubai has granted a divorce to a man who says his wife is possessed by spirits and refuses to have sex with him, reports suggest.

After persistently denying him sex, the woman finally told her husband to discuss the issue with her parents, the Gulf News daily reports, without naming the couple.

They told the man that his wife was, in fact, possessed by a jinn, and that several religious scholars had unsuccessfully tried to exorcise the spirit, the paper says.

Upon hearing this, the husband lodged a divorce case with the Dubai Sharia Court. His lawyer told a hearing: "The woman and her family cheated my client. They should have been honest and clear about the fact that the wife was possessed by a jinn. He was only told about the jinn after the problem escalated. The woman does not deserve any allowance."

In Arabic mythology, jinns - or genies - are spirits able to take human and animal forms and to exercise supernatural influence over humans.

The court awarded the husband the divorce, but asked him to pay around 40,000 dirhams (almost 11,000 US dollars or 6,800 UK pounds) in maintenance to his ex-wife.

The Dubai Appeal Court later upheld the divorce, but cancelled the alimony. It decided that the woman does not deserve it since she was not honest about the djinn issue, Gulf News says.

The Alkali Lake, known now as Walgren Lake, is an 80 to 100 acre body of water located in the Sandhills area of Northwestern Nebraska. The lake is also the reputed home of the Alkali Lake Monster which is described as a 40 foot long alligator like creature with rough, grayish brown skin and a horn like appendage located between its eyes and nostrils. Reports of the Alkali Lake Monster started in August of 1921, and the first written account of the monster appeared in a 1922 printing of the Hay Springs News.

A second written report appeared in a 1923 printing of the Omaha World Herald. According to this report a name named J.A. Johnson claimed that he and two friends saw the creature while camping on the shores of Alkali Lake. The three men reported that they saw the creature from a distance of 60 feet and stated that it looked a lot like an alligator, complete with a rhinoceros like horn. They claimed that when the creature noticed them it began to violently thrash its tail and disappeared beneath the churning surface.

Some researchers of the Alkali Lake Monster have suggested evidence that the creature was nothing more than a hoax. They state that at the time stories of the creature first appeared the Hay Springs News employed a man by the name of John G. Maher, who reportedly had a flair for tall tales and hoaxes. One such trick he and his accomplices perpetuated was the planting of a concrete cast in the local badlands where it was later "discovered" and named petrified man.

Maher was a corresponding reporter for many newspapers at the time some of which where ran by editors who where only interested in boosting circulation by printing sensational stories. As a contributing reporter for many newspapers Maher was only paid for stories that where printed, so it became necessary for these stories to sound as good as possible. Maher's attitude toward his contributions was evident when he reportedly said, "There was a great demand for stories and few things to write about, so, for an inventive mind, there was nothing to do but make up stories".

Another noteworthy piece of information is that in 1889 and 1890 the Alkali Lake area experiences a sever drought causing water levels in the lake to fall until it became little more than a puddle, causing some to question how a 40 foot monster would appear in the lake just 30 years later. While the lake continues to be a popular social and recreational gathering areas to this day sightings of the Alkali Lake Monster all but stopped in the 1920's leading most researchers to suggest that if the creature ever really did exist it has either passed away or moved out on to another lake.

The Evidence

There is currently no physical evidence to suggest that the Alkali Lake Monster is, or ever was, an actually creature.

The Sightings

In 1923, J.A. Johnson claimed that he and two friends saw the creature while camping on the

shores of Alkali Lake. The three men reported that they saw the creature from a distance of 60 feet and stated that it looked a lot like an alligator, complete with a rhinoceros like horn.

The Stats – (Where applicable)

- Classification: Lake Monster
- Size: 40 feet long
- Weight: Unknown
- Diet: Carnivorous
- Location: Alkali Lake, Nebraska
- Movement: Swimming
- Environment: Lake

A UQ neuroscientist has revealed the probable basis of a bizarre Australian Outback phenomenon that has baffled observers and scientists for centuries.

The western Queensland town of Boulia has built its tourist reputation on Min Min lights, mysterious lights that seem to follow travellers for long distances.

Professor Jack Pettigrew said despite intense interest in the Min Min, they had never been explained in a satisfactory way.

"The Min Min light seems to have magical qualities, sometimes following observers, even as they speed away in vehicles, while at other times seeming to retreat shyly," he said.

Professor Pettigrew, who is the Director of UQ's Vision, Touch and Hearing Research Centre, provides an optical explanation and data about Min Min lights in the current edition of *Clinical and Experimental Optometry*, the journal of the Optometrists Association of Australia.

He used his skills in the vision sciences combined with extensive first-hand experience of the Diamantina region of Western Queensland at night. Professor Pettigrew was studying an elusive nocturnal bird, the letter-winged kite in the region, where he encountered the phenomenon.

"The Min Min light occurs when light, from a natural or man-made source, is refracted to an observer who is tens, or even hundreds, of kilometres away, by an inverted mirage, or *Fata Morgana*," he said.

"Named after the Morgan fairy, who was reputed to be able to conjure cities on the surface of the sea ice, the *Fata Morgana* has a real physical phenomenon, being caused by a temperature inversion.

"A cold, dense layer of air next to the ground (or sea, or sea ice) carries light far over the horizon to a distant observer without the usual dissipation and radiation, to produce a vivid mirage that baffles and enchants because of its unfamiliar optical properties.

"In a celebrated and authenticated example, the Irish sea cliffs were seen floating in vivid greens and browns above the calm Atlantic by observers on a ship more than a thousand kilometres away.

"Wonderful during the day, such *Fata Morgana* can be terrifying at night when a single light source gives no hint that it is actually part of a mirage emanating from a great distance. Even hardened Outback observers can break down when they are unable to interpret the unusual optical properties of the light in terms of their own, very different, past experiences.

"The unusual terrain of the Channel Country makes the favourable atmospheric conditions more likely, while its isolation increase the impact of a single light source since the observer knows that it cannot be produced locally but sees it apparently there in front."

Professor Pettigrew said some people would prefer not to have the Min Min's mystique probed by city slickers.

"I apologise to them. However, knowing more about the unusual weather conditions responsible, could improve one's chances of seeing it," he said.

"Increased knowledge has certainly not lessened my own wonderment at the phenomenon on those infrequent occasions I've witnessed it."

Media: Further information (after 10am):

**Professor Jack Pettigrew, telephone (work) 07 3365 3842 email:
j.pettigrew@vthrc.uq.edu.au**

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Vampire killing kit goes on display



A Victorian vampire slaying kit on display in Terror and Wonder: The Gothic Imagination exhibition, at the British Library in London. (British Library/PA)

02 October 2014

A mysterious vampire slaying kit - complete with holy water, a mallet and a set of wooden stakes - is going on show in a new exhibition dedicated to the strange and supernatural world of the gothic.

The box, which also includes a crucifix, rosary beads and a pistol, is part of a new exhibition at the British Library in central London.

Some people believe the kits date back to Victorian times, with others saying they are more modern - and inspired by the famous Hammer Horror films.

Curator Greg Buzwell said: "They really do exist and we're very fortunate and lucky to have this. Every component you see in there dates from the Victorian era so you've got the mallet, the stakes, the crucifix and the holy water etc but there is a mystery around them. There is no real evidence of them existing prior to about 1970.

"There are 60 or 70 of them thought to be in existence . We think probably a lot of them were maybe made for eccentric collectors , others maybe were made on the back of the Hammer film adaptations and the renewed popularity of the vampire story but one or two of them may actually be genuine survivals from the Victorian era."

Other exhibits include Dracula author Bram Stoker's manuscript of his adaptation of his vampire novel for

the stage and a letter said to have been written by Jack the Ripper.

The document, known as the Dear Boss letter, was sent to a journalist in 1888 and written in red ink.

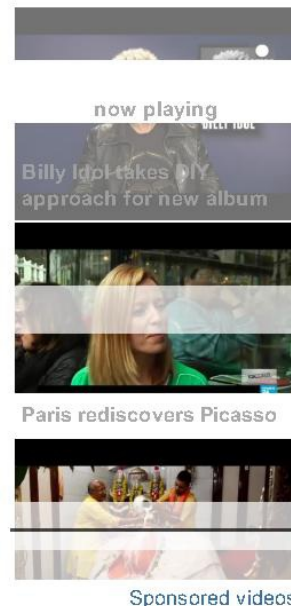
It included details of the infamous serial killer's attacks and experts have long debated whether it is a hoax or not.

Also on show are gothic-inspired fashion by Alexander McQueen and a series of pictures by photographer Martin Parr taken during the regular gathering of goths in Whitby where key scenes from Stoker's novel are set.

The exhibition's lead curator Tim Pye said: "Gothic is one of the most popular and influential modes of literature and I'm delighted that Terror and Wonder is celebrating its rich 250 year history. The exhibition features an amazingly wide range of material, from stunningly beautiful medieval artefacts to vinyl records from the early goth music scene, so there is truly something for everyone".

:: Terror and Wonder: The Gothic Imagination runs opens tomorrow and runs until January 20.

Culture videos : Billy Idol takes DIY approach for new album



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Vera Renczi

Born	Bucharest, Romania
Nationality	Romanian or Hungarian
Occupation	Housewife
Criminal penalty	Life imprisonment
Motive	Jealousy
	Killings
Date	1920s?
Target(s)	Lovers/husbands
Killed	35?
Weapon(s)	Poison (arsenic)

Vera Renczi was a Romanian or Hungarian^{[1][2][3][4]} woman known as a serial killer who allegedly poisoned 35 individuals—including her husbands, lovers, and one son—with arsenic during the 1920s.^[*citation needed*] In 1972, the Guinness Book of World Records found no authoritative sources to support the claim that 35 people were killed by Renczi in early 20th-century Romania.^[5] Before and after that time, the story has appeared in several versions, with varying details. Most sources place the murders at Berkerekul, Yugoslavia (present-day Serbia), but no such location can be securely identified. No date of any alleged event in the story can be confirmed,^[6] and the story of Vera Renczi may have originated as a fiction or a hoax.^[*citation needed*]

- 1 Early life
- 2 Subsequent murders
- 3 See also
- 4 References
- 5 Further reading
- 6 External links

Early life[edit]

According to some accounts, Renczi was born in Bucharest in 1903, but in view of the dates of her alleged crimes, a date in the late 19th century would be more appropriate. The accounts of her life, which are precised below, are lacking in verifiable documentary supporting evidence. Her mother died when she was 13 and she moved with her father to Yugoslavia where she attended a boarding school.^[7] By the age of fifteen, she had become increasingly unmanageable by her parents and had frequently run away from home with numerous boyfriends, many of whom were significantly older than she was.^[8] Early childhood friends described Renczi as having an almost pathological desire for constant male companionship^[*citation needed*] and possessing a highly jealous and suspicious nature.^[9]

Shortly before the age of twenty, her first marriage was to a wealthy Austrian banker named Karl Schick^[*citation needed*] many years her senior and she bore him a son named Lorenzo.^{[7][9]} Left at home daily while her older husband worked, she began to suspect that her

husband was being unfaithful. One evening, in a jealous rage, Renczi poisoned his dinner wine with arsenic and began to tell family, friends, and neighbors that he had abandoned her and their son.[*citation needed*] After approximately a year of "mourning", she then declared that she had heard word of her supposedly estranged husband's death in a car accident.[8]

Subsequent murders[edit]

Shortly after allegedly hearing the news of her first husband's "automobile accident" Renczi remarried[*citation needed*], this time to a man nearer her own age[*citation needed*]. However, the relationship was a tumultuous one and Renczi was again plagued by the suspicion that her new husband was involved in extramarital affairs[*citation needed*]. After only months of marriage the man vanished[*citation needed*] and Renczi then told friends and family that he had abandoned her.[9] After a year had passed, she then claimed to have received a letter from her husband proclaiming his intentions of leaving her forever.[8] This would be her last marriage.[9]

Although Renczi did not remarry, she spent the next several years carrying out a number of affairs, some clandestine with married men, and others openly[*citation needed*]. The men came from an array of backgrounds and social positions. All would vanish within months, weeks, and in some cases, even days after becoming romantically involved with her.[*citation needed*] When connected to men she was openly having an affair with, she would invariably concoct stories of them being "unfaithful" and having "abandoned her".[*citation needed*]

After the wife of one of Renczi's lovers followed him to Renczi's residence one evening and the man subsequently never returned home, the police were called to investigate his disappearance[*citation needed*]. Upon searching Renczi's wine cellar, they discovered 32 unburied, zinc-lined coffins. Each contained a male corpse in varying stages of decomposition.[*citation needed*] Renczi was arrested and taken into police custody where she confessed to having poisoned the 32 men with arsenic when she suspected they had been unfaithful to her or when she believed their interest in her was waning[*citation needed*]. She also confessed to the police that on occasion she liked to sit in her armchair amidst the coffins, surrounded by all of her former suitors.[8]

Renczi also confessed to murdering her two husbands and her son Lorenzo[*citation needed*]. She told police that one day when her son had come to pay her a visit, he had accidentally discovered the coffins in her wine cellar and threatened to blackmail her and she subsequently poisoned him and disposed of his body[*citation needed*]. She also feared he would soon leave her to marry someone so she held him in her arms as he lay dying so she would be the last person to hug him.[8]

She was convicted of 35 murders and sentenced to life imprisonment, where she subsequently died[*citation needed*]. Some have speculated that Renczi's story may have inspired Joseph Kesselring's play *Arsenic and Old Lace*, yet this is incorrect. It was the Amy Archer-Gilligan case which the playwright used as his model.[*citation needed*]

In 2005, The Discovery Channel's three-part series *Deadly Women* recounted the history of Renczi, portrayed through reenactments and commentaries from FBI agents and criminal

profiler Candice DeLong and a forensic pathologist. Renczi was featured in the series' first episode titled "Obsession",^[10] where she is described as having killed her victims in the "1930s in Bucharest, Romania".^[11] As for her motivation, the voice-over says that "modern analysis suggest she was simply looking for love".^[12]

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Water meter installed at 'fake' house

Monday, October 20, 2014

irishexaminer.com



The fake house facade, where Irish Water engineers installed a meter on Friday. Picture: North West Newspix)
By Stephen Maguire

Irish Water has been slammed for putting a water meter outside a 'fake' house in Co Donegal.

The derelict house, which has been boarded up for many years, is located on Ballybofey's Main St. The local Tidy Towns Association even painted fake curtains, plant pots, and windows on the building.

However, that didn't stop contractors from GMC Sierra from installing a water meter at the house last week.

Two workmen spent two hours fitting the meter and installing a cap.

The move has been slammed by local Fianna Fáil county councillor Patrick McGowan, who said it was a "complete waste of resources".

He said Irish Water must stop placing meters outside derelict houses and concentrate on fixing leaks instead.

"This is just a complete waste of money and resources. They just cannot go around and place water meters at every building," he said.

"The local Tidy Towns committee are active in trying to make these derelict buildings presentable. And now money and resources are being spent on placing water meters at them.

"Irish Water would need to step back and take a look at where they are spending their resources.

"All this money would be better spent improving the quality of water and making sure leaks are fixed."

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Beyond the Pale: The Albino Cannibals of Ghost Mountain

Tales of strange people bonded together in self-policing communities are common throughout the States, and indeed, throughout the world. Pennsylvania is no exception. These communities can include anybody out of the ordinary, but the particular favorite candidates for such campfire scare stories are albinos. There's nothing like a lack of pigmentation to send the overactive imagination into a tailspin. Pale skin and pale blue or red eyes are the stuff of vampires, and indeed, some believe that the albino's discomfort with bright light may have led to many of the tales of night-walking bloodsuckers.



But if any communities of albinos do exist in the mountains of Pennsylvania, let's inject a sense of civility into the proceedings here. Driving around people's homes by night with the intention of disturbing them is a form of persecution. Let's treat these stories as what they are: good fun, and not a call to single out any group for unpleasant treatment.

Child-Stealing, Rock-Salt-Shooting, Circus-Escaping, Inbreeding Clan

Every rural area in the country seems to be inhabited by a reclusive band of albinos. We here in Sellersville, PA, have our own. These cannibalistic, child-stealing, rock-salt-shooting, circus-escaping, inbreeding clan of albinos are said to live high up in the woods on Haycock Mountain and were the stuff of legend in my childhood. They're said to waylay unwary travelers and eat them. They supposedly sometimes raid local farms for livestock and leave gruesome evidence behind. Local police know of their existence and are scared to go up the mountain.

They live in a huge concrete house with no windows, and throw firecrackers at passing cars in the middle of the night. They hide in trees and drop down onto unsuspecting hikers, dragging them away to become dinner for the rest of the clan. They block back roads and perform unspeakable rites on moonlit nights. They cavort like fairies amongst the trees, frightening passers-by with their unnatural complexion. Sightings of them flitting from tree to tree and being mistaken for errant specters even supposedly gave one local road its name: Ghost Mountain Road.

My own investigations into this have turned up plenty of stories and supposed eye-witness accounts, with some proof in the form of rock-salt residue blasted into the cheap paint jobs of local high schoolers' Camaros. But, of the albinos themselves, not a trace. Although I did find two abandoned houses, one with all the bathtubs and sinks filled with a mixture of mud, leaves, and what may once have been water. A search of local newspaper archives has revealed a depressing lack of corroborating evidence here. But hey, not all the news gets reported, y'know? —Amy McCormick

There's a place we call Ghost Mountain [actually Haycock Mountain], near an old covered

bridge where local legend has it that someone had hanged himself. It's also said that if you turn your car on and off three times, your car will cease to start. You can really get a sense of bad vibes around that area. There is a house near there where albinos live. The story with them is that if you dare go on their property they will chase you away with a shotgun in hand. A couple of my friends found this out to be true. –Melissa

The Albino House... I never saw the actual albinos myself, but did see the house. It's pretty strange. You have to go down a dirt road and just before you reach a cool old-timey red covered bridge. On the way to the place down the bumpy dirt road are little doors in the side of a hill, strange tunnel complexes, hobbit holes and other freaky stuff. It turns out they are really root cellars, but who the hell knows what a root cellar is anymore? –Marko

There is a place where I like to take my friends to that are new to the "ghost" scene. It's called Ghost Mountain and it is in Bucks Co., past Palisades H.S. It's a pretty cool place. It's a dirt road and once you turn onto the road you see this in which sometimes you can see an elderly lady upstairs knitting. But the great thing about her is you can see right through her! Across the road from the house there is a wine cellar that goes into the side of the hill. Each of my friends have different stories of what they have seen when they've open it. The different stories are that they see a huge dark shadow standing right there when they open it, the shadow was sitting in a chair with his head down.



There is the covered bridge. Go over the bridge, turn your car off, beep the horn three times, turn your headlights on and you are supposed to see a man hanging there. I've only seen it once. –Jenilee

For more on Ghost Mountain and Pennsylvania's many other Fabled People and Places see Weird Pennsylvania.

"ALBINO VILLAGE IS A TRULY WEIRD PLACE, which I visited often in my teens," says Carl S. of Paramus, N.J.

"At that time there were only a few albino families left. They were difficult to spot - even when we blew our car horns and shouted. By the early 1960s, all that was left was the entry tunnel and a few shacks." The legend of Albino Village dates back to the early 1900s. The original settlement was called Frogtown because of it's location on the Passaic River, and as one home owner claims, was once a colony comprised of pigment impaired individuals.

During the 1950s and early '60s, when B movies were raging with horror and atomic mutations, many a teenager would drive through the tunnel late at night, with car headlights off, in hopes of scaring their date and most likely annoying the neighbors.

As Mr. S. exclaims, "You would have to fight off the urge to scream and flee after riding through the tunnel entrance. It was very scary."

Today the site, located in Clifton, has evolved the way most of these places eventually do; upscale and unassuming. But it does have its place in Weird N.J. history.

You can read more tales from Albino Village in issue #8 of Weird NJ.

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Why Conspiracy Theorists Are So Obsessed With JFK's "Umbrella Man"

io9.com



Expand

At the moment when bullets were being fired into JFK's motorcade, a man can be seen standing on the side of the road near the car holding an open black umbrella. But it wasn't raining. This is exactly the kind of detail that sets a fire under conspiracy theorists — and

here's why.

Indeed, it was a sunny day, although it had rained the night before, and no one else in Dallas was holding an umbrella. It is a genuine anomaly – something that sticks out like a sore thumb.

The event also defies our intuition about probability. Even if one could accept that somewhere on the streets of Dallas that morning one man decided to hold an open umbrella for some strange reason, what are the odds that this one man would be essentially standing right next to the president's car when the bullets began to fly?

Our evolved tendency for pattern recognition and looking for significance in events screams that this anomaly must have a compelling explanation, and since it is associated with the assassination of a president, it must be a sinister one.



Why Conspiracy Theorists Are So Obsessed With JFK's "Umbrella Man"

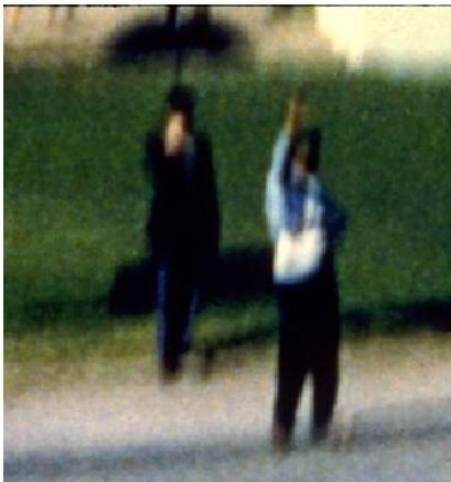
When you delve into the details of any complex historical event, however, anomalies such as this are certain to surface. People are quirky individual beings with rich and complex histories and motivations. People do strange things for strange reasons. There is no way to account for all possible thought processes firing around in the brains of every

person involved in an event.

Often the actions of others seem unfathomable to us. Our instinct is to try to explain the behavior of others as resulting from mostly internal forces. We tend to underestimate the influence of external factors. This is called the fundamental attribution error.

We also tend to assume that the actions of others are deliberate and planned, rather than random or accidental.

The common assumption underlying all of these various instincts is that there is a specific purpose to events, and especially the actions of others. We further instinctively fear that this purpose is sinister, or may be working against our own interests in some way. In this way, we all have a little conspiracy theorist inside us.



Expand

15

I also find it interesting that these tendencies are often not inhibited by the many counter-examples that we encounter on a regular basis. The vast majority of the time, when I find the actions of another person puzzling, if I am able to simply ask them to account for their behavior, there is usually a non-sinister explanation. There were factors of which I was unaware. They knew (or at least believed) something I did not know, or were reacting to an external stimuli, or had a previous experience informing their current action. Sometimes they were just doing something whimsical for fun or to stave off boredom, or perhaps they were satisfying some minor curiosity.

In response to such experiences we should question our basic underlying assumptions of purpose and deliberateness. Instead, we tend to dismiss this data as quirky exceptions, and carry on with our assumptions intact.

An Exercise in Anomaly Hunting

Conspiracy theorists have essentially formalized the tendency to assume agency, deliberateness, and sinister motivations in the quirky details of events. Conspiracy theories are often an exercise in anomaly hunting. When anomalies, like the Umbrella Man, are inevitably found it is assumed that they are evidence for a conspiracy.

The assumption that anomalies must be significant rather than random is an error in the understanding of statistics, a form of innumeracy. It is also partly the lottery fallacy – which involves asking the wrong question. The name of the fallacy is based on the most common illustrative example. If John Smith wins the lottery our natural tendency is to consider what the odds are that John Smith won (usually hundreds of millions to one). However, the correct question is – what are the odds that anyone would have won, in which case the odds are close to one to one (at least over a few weeks).

The fallacy is in confusing a priori probability with posterior probability – once you know the outcome, asking for the odds of that particular outcome. This is perhaps more obvious when we consider the odds of someone winning the lottery twice. This occurs regularly, and when it does the press often reports the odds as being astronomical. They are usually also falsely considering the odds of one person winning on two successive individual lottery tickets. Further, they calculate the odds of John Smith winning twice, rather than the odds of anyone anywhere winning twice (the odds are actually quite good and match the observed rate).

So – conspiracy theorists tend to ask, what are the odds of a man standing with an open umbrella right next to the president when he was shot? Rather they should be asking – what are the odds of anything unusual occurring in any way associated with the JFK assassination?

There is another aspect to anomaly hunting and that is the use of open-ended criteria. What constitutes an anomaly? Well, anything you want to count as an anomaly. There are no specific criteria. In practice the criterion is – it seems weird to me. This then opens the door to confirmation bias. Seek and ye shall find.

What, then, is the explanation for the seemingly bizarre actions of the Umbrella Man? A nice documentary, recirculating on social media, has the answer. The man (Louie Steven Witt) was asked to come forward and explain his actions, and he did, before congress. The umbrella was a protest of Joseph Kennedy's appeasement policies when he was Ambassador to the Court of St. James in 1938-39, with the umbrella being a reference to the umbrella often carried by Neville Chamberlain.

This is actually not as random as it may seem (and this is the one hole in the documentary's treatment of the topic). An open umbrella was a common protest of appeasement policies. According to the historical society:

Umbrella protests first began in England after Chamberlain arrived home from the conference carrying his trademark accessory. Wherever Chamberlain traveled, the opposition party in Britain protested his appeasement at Munich by displaying umbrellas. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Americans on the far Right employed umbrellas to criticize leaders supposedly appeasing the enemies of the United States. Some politicians even refused to use them for that reason. Vice President Richard Nixon banned his own aides from carrying umbrellas when picking him up at the airport for fear of being photographed and charged as an appeaser.

That puts the umbrella protest into more context. In the early 1960s I can see there still being people around who were angry at any attempts to appease Hitler and the Nazis prior to the start of WWII. I also wonder if Witt was protesting JFK in some way, but did not want to say so after he was assassinated and so blamed the protest on his father. Either way, the umbrella is not such a random detail after all.

Conclusion

The various aspects of anomaly hunting are critical to understand in order to avoid falling into this seductive mental trap. Poor intuition for statistics, logical fallacies, confirmation bias, and the use of open-ended criteria combine with the fundamental attribution error and the tendency to see patterns and significance everywhere to create the powerful impression that something (usually sinister) must be going on.

Our penchant for narrative then takes over. We love a good story, and the notion that some tiny clue in the form of an anomaly can reveal a vast unseen conspiracy is a more compelling story telling than just random noise in the background of history. Unless, of course, your telling the story of how we fool ourselves. That, of course, is a story I like telling.

This article originally appeared at Neurologica Blog and is republished here with permission.

Why Is There a Huge Masturbation Billboard Over Sunset Blvd? laweekly.com

By Dennis Romero

Fri, Oct 31, 2014 at 8:04 AM



New York acts like it's our daddy. But it just ain't so. It turns out that the city that allegedly never sleeps can't handle a little sexual innuendo. Its loss is L.A.'s gain.

The folks at adult website Pornhub erected, and we do mean *erected*, a billboard above New York's Times Square a couple weeks ago but quickly pulled it down following complaints from the hotel on which it was affixed.

The "all you need is a hand" ad, which reflects the Beatles-popularized saying,

"All you need is love," and which features the two-handed heart sign, is now all ours.

PornHub says the L.A. version went up across the street from the Standard Hotel on the Sunset Strip in West Hollywood on Monday.

"While Pornhub could not find another location in Times Square to erect its billboard, it did find a location in Los Angeles," a rep for the site told us.

The "mainstream" campaign is the product of a "creative director contest" in May that drew 3,000 submissions for ad ideas.

The "all you need is hand" concept was submitted by Istanbul copywriter Nuri Galver.

PornHub, part of adult-site juggernaut **MindGeek**, which has offices in greater L.A., says it's the most-viewed website in porn.

The company was forced by the letter of its contract to take the Times Square billboard down in mid-October after the Hilton DoubleTree hotel objected to its presence in the wholesome neighborhood that used to be the North American epicenter of sex shops.

So far we haven't heard any complaints about the Sunset Boulevard advertisement. But then again, this *is* a big, cosmopolitan town.

Send feedback and tips to the author. Follow Dennis Romero on Twitter at @dennisjromero. Follow LA Weekly News on Twitter at @laweeklynews.

Ghost

The Grey Lady ghost was first reported to have been seen in Willard Library in the late 1930s by a custodian. Since that time, those looking—and not looking—for the apparition have reported unexplained events and sights.

Who's Looking?

- The Grey Lady was last reportedly sighted on August 10, 2010 in the basement hallway by the Assistant Children's Librarian.
- Psychics visiting the library in 2007 say they were able to verify that a ghost has been there, and paranormal investigative groups have brought in equipment designed to locate it.
- Several library employees have reported seeing the ghost, including Margaret Maier, Children's Librarian, and Helen Kamm, Library Assistant.
- During a visit to the library, lecturers from the University of Southern Indiana say they saw the ghost peering into water.
- Policemen responding to a security alarm at the library spotted two ghosts in an upstairs window of the library.
- A library patron reported an encounter with the Grey Lady in the library elevator, and a local weathercaster also reported an encounter with the spirit.
- Hundreds of people look for the Grey Lady every October, during Ghost Tours sponsored by the library. Eight—hundred curious individuals attended the first such tour in the late 1990s, which have been a popular annual event ever since. Check the calendar of library events for upcoming tours.



Image of Louise Carpenter

Unexplained Occurrences

- Water turned on or off
- Smell of perfume
- Feeling of cold
- Noises
- Books and furniture found moved
- Feeling of touch on hair and earrings
- Odd items found in library

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William Dawes was a Boston tanner and one of the riders sent by Dr. Joseph Warren to alert John Hancock and Samuel Adams of the approaching British army on the night of April 18th, 1775.

Dawes was born in Boston on April 6, 1745. He was the second of twelve children born to William Dawes and Lydia Boone. He married twice, first to Mehitable May, who died in October of 1793, and then to Lydia Gendall.

On October 28, 1767, Dawes was one of 650 Boston citizens who signed a "nonimportation agreement," promising not to buy goods imported from Britain, which included furniture, clothes, nails, anchors, gauze, shoe leather, malt liquors, loaf sugar, starch and glue. To further support this cause, the Boston Gazette states that Dawes also wore a suite made entirely in America on his wedding day.

In April of 1768, Dawes joined the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company, a private training organization for militia officers, and was also promoted to second major of the regiment of the Boston militia. Dawes was also a member of the patriotic group the Sons of Liberty and was a Freemason, although it is not clear which Boston lodge he belonged to.



William Dawes, oil painting by John Johnston, circa 1785-95

According to the book "History of the Military Company of the Massachusetts," as an ardent patriot, Dawes often rode throughout the colony trying to find recruits for the colonial cause:

"He scoured the country, organizing and aiding in the birth of the Revolution. His granddaughter wrote: 'During these rides, he sometimes borrowed a friendly miller's hat and clothes and sometimes he borrowed a dress of a farmer, and had a bag of meal behind his back on the horse. At one such time a British soldier tried to take away his meal, but grandfather presented arms and rushed on. The meal was for his family. But in trying to stir up recruits, he was often in danger.'"

In October of 1774, Dawes planned and led a daring break-in at the gun house on Boston Common. While the guards were at roll call, Dawes and several members of his artillery company stole two small brass cannons, sneaking them out the back window, and hid them in a large box under the desk in a nearby school house. When a British sergeant later discovered the cannons were missing, he exclaimed: *"They are gone. These fellows will steal the teeth out of your head while you are keeping guard."* The guards searched the yard, gun-house and school house but never found the hidden cannons. The cannons remained there for two weeks until Dawes had them removed one night in a wheelbarrow and hid them under a pile of coal in a blacksmith shop. On January 5, 1775, the Committee of Safety voted to move the stolen cannons to Waltham. The cannons remained in active service throughout the

revolutionary war.

Dawes also injured his arm during the break-in and was attended to by fellow patriot Dr. Joseph Warren but, due to the illegal nature of the event, Dawes thought it best not to tell Warren how the injury happened.

It was Warren who later sent both Dawes and Paul Revere on their famous midnight ride on April 18th, according to the book "History of the Military Company of the Massachusetts:

"For some days before the 19th of April, 1775, it had been known the British were preparing to move. It was suspected that the destination of the troops would be Concord, where stores of war material were gathered, and in the vicinity of which were Hancock, Adams and other Revolutionary leaders. On the afternoon of the day before the attack, Gen. Warren learned that the British were about to start. He waited until they had begun to move their boats, and then sent out William Dawes, Jr, by the land route, over the [Boston] neck, and across the river at the Brighton Bridge to Cambridge and Lexington; and directly after, 'about ten o'clock,' he 'sent in great haste' for Paul Revere, and sent him by the water route through Charlestown to Lexington to arouse the country, and warn Hancock and Adams."

Revere and Dawes took different routes during their rides. Revere crossed the Charles river by boat and rode from Charlestown through Somerville, Medford, Arlington and Lexington. Dawes traveled a longer distance than Revere, going south across Boston neck to Roxbury, then west and north through Brookline, Brighton, Cambridge and Lexington, covering a total of 17 miles in three hours. Dawes' route also required passing through a guarded gate at Boston neck, which was on high alert at the time, according to the History Channel website:

"Dawes set off around 9 p.m., about an hour before Warren dispatched Revere on his mission. Within minutes, he was at the British guardhouse on Boston Neck, which was on high alert. According to some accounts, Dawes eluded the guards by slipping through with some British soldiers or attaching himself to another party. Other accounts say he pretended to be a bumbling drunken farmer. The simplest explanation is that he was already friendly with the sentries, who let him pass. However Dawes did it, he made it in the nick of time. Shortly after he passed through the guardhouse, the British halted all travel out of Boston."

Unlike Revere, Dawes didn't stop to alert colonial minutemen during his ride and instead rode straight on to Lexington. It's not clear why Dawes did this but it is possible that he believed his mission was only to alert John Hancock and Samuel Adams of the approaching British army. As a result, the militia took longer to respond to the British army's approach on Dawes route than on Revere's.

Dawes finally met up with Revere at the Hancock-Clarke house in Lexington, where Hancock and Adams were staying, around 12:30 am. After warning Hancock and Adams of the approaching army, Revere and Dawes mounted their horses again and set off for Concord, running into Dr. Samuel Prescott along the way.



Hancock-Clarke House in Lexington in May of 2014

Prescott decided to join them on their trip but the three riders soon encountered a British patrol around 3 am. According to Revere's account of the ride, Dawes and Prescott managed to get away but Revere was captured:

"After I had been there [at the Hancock-Clarke house] about half an hour, Mr. Dawes came; after we refreshed our selves, we and set off for Concord, to secure the stores, &c. there. We were overtaken by a young Doctor Prescott, whom we found to be a high Son of Liberty. I told them of the ten officers that

Mr. Devens met, and that it was probable we might be stopped before we got to Concord; for I supposed that after night, they divided them selves, and that two of them had fixed themselves in such passages as were most likely to stop any intelligence going to Concord. I likewise mentioned, that we had better alarm all the inhabitants till we got to Concord; the young Doctor much approved of it, and said, he would stop with either of us, for the people between that & Concord knew him, & would give the more credit to what we said. We had got nearly half way. Mr Dawes & the Doctor stopped to alarm the people of a house: I was about one hundred rod a head, when I saw two men, in nearly the same situation as those officer were, near Charlestown. I called for the Doctor & Dawes to come up; – were two & we would have them in an Instant I was surrounded by four; – they had placed themselves in a straight road, that inclined each way; they had taken down a pair of bars on the North side of the road, & two of them were under a tree in the pasture. The Doctor being foremost, he came up; and we tried to get past them; but they being armed with pistols & swords, they forced us in to the pasture; – the Doctor jumped his horse over a low stone wall, and got to Concord."

Dawes, tried to outrun the patrol but knowing his horse was too tired, he scared off the two soldiers chasing him by riding up to a nearby farm house and shouting "Halloo, boys, I've got two of 'em!" The soldiers feared it was an ambush and rode away. Unfortunately, Dawes had halted his horse so suddenly that he was bucked off it. His whereabouts for the rest of the night are unknown.

Dawes reportedly later joined the Continental army in Cambridge and some sources state he fought at the Battle of Bunker Hill in June, 1775. He also moved his family to Worcester, sometime during the ongoing Siege of Boston, where he was later appointed commissary.

According to the book "History of the Military Company of the Massachusetts" when a group of captured British and Hessian soldiers that had been looting Worcester along their march were brought to Dawes for their daily rations, Dawes deliberately shortchanged them out of revenge:

"The Germans stole and robbed houses, as they came along, of clothing and

everything on which they could lay their hands to a large amount. When at Worcester, indeed, they themselves were robbed, though in another way. One Dawes, the issuing commissary, upon the first company coming to draw their rations, balanced the scales by putting into that which contained the weight of a large stone. When that company was gone (unobserved by the Germans, but not by all present), the stone was taken away before the next came: and all the other companies except the first had short allowance."



Illustration of Paul Revere's ride published in "Paul Revere's Ride" by Longfellow circa 1905

Despite the fact that Dawes played a pivotal role in the midnight ride of April 18th, 1775, he has been almost entirely forgotten by historians and completely overshadowed by Paul Revere. One reason is because Revere wrote a personal account of his ride, which has been widely circulated, yet very few records exist of Dawes' participation in the ride. Another reason is because of the publication of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem "The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere" in 1861, which wrote Dawes and Prescott out of the event entirely.

In an attempt to remedy this, Century Magazine published a parody of the poem, titled "The Midnight Ride of William Dawes" by Helen F. Moore, in 1896:

*I am a wandering, bitter shade,
Never of me was a hero made;
Poets have never sung my praise,
Nobody crowned my brow with bays;
And if you ask me the fatal cause,
I answer only, "My name was Dawes"
'Tis all very well for the children to hear
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere;
But why should my name be quite forgot,
Who rode as boldly and well, God wot?
Why should I ask? The reason is clear —
My name was Dawes and his Revere.
When the lights from the old North Church flashed out,
Paul Revere was waiting about,
But I was already on my way.
The shadows of night fell cold and gray
As I rode, with never a break or a pause;
But what was the use, when my name was Dawes!
History rings with his silvery name;
Closed to me are the portals of fame.
Had he been Dawes and I Revere,
No one had heard of him, I fear.*

*No one has heard of me because
He was Revere and I was Dawes.*

Sadly, not only have historians forgotten about Dawes but even some of his own peers forgot his name, according to the History Channel website:

"Contemporaries couldn't even recall his [Dawes] name. William Munroe, who had stood guard at the Hancock-Clarke House, later reported that Revere arrived along with a 'Mr. Lincoln.' In a centennial commemoration, Harper's Magazine called Dawes 'Ebenezer Dorr.'"

Dawes died on February 25, 1799. Even the real location of his grave has been forgotten. For years it was believed that Dawes was buried in King's Chapel Burying ground, where he has a headstone. Yet, in 2007, it was discovered that Dawes might be buried in his wife's family plot in Forest Hills Cemetery instead.

Sources:

"William Dawes and His Ride with Paul Revere"; Henry Ware Holland; 1878

"Legend of the Third Horseman"; Charles J. Caes; 2009

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Harvard Gazette; Revolutionary Discover; July 16 2013:
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History Channel: The Midnight Ride of William Dawes: <http://www.history.com/news/the-midnight-ride-of-william-dawes>

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About Rebecca Beatrice Brooks

Rebecca Beatrice Brooks is a freelance writer and history lover who got her start in journalism working for small-town newspapers in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Rebecca has a Bachelor of Arts in journalism from the University of New Hampshire. Visit Rebecca's blog at <http://rbbrooks.tumblr.com>

Comments

William Dawes: The Forgotten Midnight Rider — 3 Comments

1. Harold Titus on February 17, 2014 at 2:52 pm said:

Thank you, Rebecca, for your excellent article. Below is my fictional account of Dawes and Revere's meeting with Samuel Prescott and Revere's capture, taken from my novel "Crossing the River."

Anticipating better fare at Wright Tavern than Reverend Clarke's bread and cheese, Revere and Dawes proceeded along the Old Concord road.

"You or me?" Dawes asked, his close-set eyes, long nose, and grinning mouth presenting a comical look, the rooftop of the house they now approached visible beyond a copse of trees.

"You."

Revere watched Billy Dawes rap on the front door; he heard Dawes shout the alarm to a person at an upstairs window. Much better to share this work, he thought. It made the night seem less perilous. Definitely less lonely. His esteemed friend in Boston would be worrying about them. Here they were, working well together, each beforehand having worked well separately.

"How far d'you think the redcoats have gotten?" Dawes asked, having returned to the road.

"What time is it?"

Dawes removed his watch from his coat pocket. He studied the hands in the moonlight.

"Bout 1:15 a.m."

"I would say, ... Menotomy."

They resumed riding.

The stillness of the night played upon Revere's sensibilities. He thought, A blessed tranquility swaddles the land. Weary toiler, rest your head, all is safe. He and Dawes violated that dictum.

As did another. Dawes heard first the cantering horse.

"The patrol?"

"It's one horse. But be ready."

Horse and rider appeared in the bright moonlight. Seeing Revere and Dawes hunched in their saddles, the rider slowed his horse to a walk. He stopped ten feet away.

"Good evening, gentlemen," he declared, "or should I say good morning, for it is surely that."

Revere nodded. The man was cordial.

"I'm Doctor Samuel Prescott. On my way home from my fiancée's house. Which explains my presence at this hour." The young man beamed. "And you, gentlemen, if I may be permitted to ask?"

Grinning, Dawes gave his name.

Transferring his smile, the doctor regarded Revere.

The silversmith answered. Prescott's quick change of expression amused him.

"I am honored, sir! Indeed, ... fortunate! I too am a son of liberty! Though admittedly not ... Concord is astir because of you! Of the message you so recently delivered." Prescott leaned forward. "That I should speak to the man who ..." Grinning still, he shook his head. "My betrothed, when she hears me speak, will deem me a prevaricator. Would that I have you hiding behind the door!"

They laughed. The young doctor was engaging, likable.

"I'm on my way to Concord, sir," Doctor Prescott stated. "Are you traveling in that direction?"

"We're carrying another message, doctor." Revere paused. Prescott's responsive face sobered. Revere lengthened the pause. "The regulars are out."

"They might be an hour behind us," Dawes added quickly. The cordwainer repositioned his large, flapped hat.

Prescott stared. They watched him swallow, grimace. "I wonder why I'm surprised at this."

Wanting the conversation to end but exercising patience, Revere stared at the dark tops of two pines.

"Then may I accompany you, actually assist you? I'm well known here, as a doctor and a patriot." Prescott looked down the road, looked back at Revere. "I believe that my words would bring special emphasis to your message."

Three express riders, to do the job of one. Amused, Revere thought again of his doctor friend. Joseph would want to know everything about this fine young man. "By all means, doctor," he said, knowing Prescott's request wanted immediate acceptance. "We welcome your company. But I must warn you. Our work entails risk." He paused, to elicit a more intense reaction. "Somewhere ahead of us we may yet encounter a British patrol. You accompany us ... at your peril."

Irises centered, Prescott nodded.

A half-hour's riding brought them two miles closer to Concord. Revere had decided he would return to the Clarke house immediately after he had alerted Major Buttrick. He wanted to know what Adams and Hancock had done to protect themselves. After that, ... events, not preconceived intentions, determined more often than not his actions. The young doctor and Billy Dawes had stopped at the door of another farmhouse. Revere rode contentedly ahead. The stillness, crispness, and clarity of the night braced him. He thought, A city man would do well to take a moonlit ride on such a star-bright, spring night.

Moon-crafted shadows lay upon the road. High above, tiny beads of light glittered.

Revere heard a screech and the flapping of wings. The stillness that ensued seemed otherworldly. He heard faintly the passage of water over rocks.

Such moments renewed his belief in the Almighty Creator. In six days the Lord had made the world. On the seventh He had rested.

Man, God's greatest creation, defiled it. Along this peaceful, illuminated roadway many soldiers would march. Tranquility lost. But not yet. There were moments, he thought, when a man, quite alone, did feel God's purpose.

He had stopped his horse at the top of a gentle rise to enjoy the night's serenity. When he heard the sound of his companions' horses, he urged his own forward. Having ridden ten rods to a turn in the road, he spied two soldiers on horseback, waiting in the darkness of a large maple.

This time he was not outnumbered!

"Dawes! Prescott! Come up! British officers!"

Mounted soldiers, brandishing pistols, burst forth from shadows behind him!

Kicking his horse's sides, shouting, Revere propelled his mount forward.

"God damn you, stop! If you go an inch farther you are a dead man!" Flanking him, a long-bodied, snarling officer rotated the end of his pistol.

Revere looked over his right shoulder. Prescott, his whip handle turned about, was rapidly advancing.

Where was Dawes?

Seconds later Prescott was abreast of him. Cursing officers, waving swords, accosted them.

"Into that pasture! Through that space into that pasture!" one of them shouted.

"Into that pasture now or we will blow your brains out!"

Revere and Prescott veered through the opening in the rail fence.

Revere strained to see what lay ahead. Two riders sat motionless under a solitary tree. Beyond appeared to be a dark wood. "Put on!" Prescott shouted. The doctor yanked his horse off course.

Too late to follow, Revere spurred his horse into a full gallop. If he could but reach the wood! Turning his head, he saw Prescott's horse leap an obstruction. Prescott's two pursuers halted.

The two that had been under the tree were now leading Revere's chasers. He heard their labored pursuit.

Just ahead! He searched for an opening where, once within, he would pull up, dismount, and escape on foot. To his dismay out of several openings exited more soldiers! Almost immediately they were about him! He veered away but one, reaching dangerously, seized his horse's bridle. They surrounded him. Stopping him, they aimed their pistols at his breast.

Placing his hands on his horse's neck, shutting his eyes, Revere aspirated.

At least Prescott had escaped.

2. Pingback: Paul Revere: Patriot and Artisan | History of Massachusetts

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Witchcraft and Women in Medieval Christianity

Jae-hyun Kim (KIATS, Korea Institute for Advanced Theological Studies)

Witches and the Church

Witches and vampires draw much attention on Halloween day, in the Harry Potter novels, and in vampire movies. Whether or not they believe in them in a religious sense, many people nowadays simply assume that sort of world and witchcraft might exist somewhere. Personal preference, imagination, and imitation to witchcraft simply cause a grudging complaint from Christianity. In the medieval world, alleged magicians and witches were out there but their activity was restricted by the watchful eyes of the church.

Witchcraft refers to a certain power that generates a supernatural phenomenon by means of humans, often called witches, not directly by means a divine being. Witches were believed to conduct various harmful deeds in society and to the church with the help of devils. Witchcraft frequently appears to be related to a diabolic power, to magic, and to evil in a negative and pejorative sense.¹

A witch is often described as someone who invokes evil passion, brings calamity, and even calls up the dead. Witches were believed to have the power to cast magic spells, dance with the devil, and ride brooms to attend at the Sabbath. Are witches realities, fantasy, fiction, or the presumed belief-system of certain people? Documents and stories from the middle ages tell that people conducted black masses and worshipped strange gods. In spite of the controversy over the factuality of phenomena, many people seemed to regard witchcraft as a genuine experience, whether religious, cultural, or psychological.

Coexisting and competing with pagan beliefs and sorcery in medieval Christianity, witch trials and related controversies came to the forefront in the 14th–15th centuries, and reached its peak between the 16 and 17th centuries. Richard Kieckhefer's "Calendar of Witch Trials" tells that witchcraft was a wide phenomenon in the 1300–1500.² This was the beginning stage of the witch controversy, but it provided a real momentum for further witch trials. Even if Kieckhefer's use of the term witchcraft includes sorcery, invocation, diabolism (similar to witchcraft), we can see that witchcraft emerged as a major issue in late medieval Christianity.

In the witch controversy, women were the main victims in most of cases. In England and Germany more than three-quarters of the victims were women. Demographic surveys are not so different in European countries, so we can assume that this was the case in other European countries as well. Why did "these fragile women" fall victim to widespread witchcraft? What was the attitude of the medieval church toward this issue? What was the attitude of the medieval church toward women between "the devil's gateway" and "the bride of Christ" from the time of Jerome and Tertullian on? With these questions in mind, I will look at the relationship between witches and medieval Christianity. I will begin with a definition of witchcraft, a short history of witches, and some examples from medieval texts, and will then offer a hermeneutical evaluation and theological interpretation of this issue.

Witches—"It is As If They Are Seized by a Demon"

Two approaches will be helpful in locating witchcraft in medieval Christianity. First, let us look at the following three stages of activity as they were labeled by the Church: paganism, sorcery, and witchcraft. In labeling unbelievers and theological

¹ For general issues of definition, see Darren Odridge, *Witchcraft Reader*, 1–20.

² Richard Kieckhefer, *European Witch Trials*, 106–149.

outsiders, the medieval church had developed three different categories. When Christians evangelized early medieval Europe, they struggled against and competed with many “pagans.” Once they had established Christianity to a certain extent, the church defined outsiders or the unfaithful as “magicians.” From the 14th century on, the Church developed the idea of witchcraft in a fuller sense to eliminate “weeds in their own gardens.” Christian theologians have shown a common line of argument in treating these three categories.

As J. Russell argues, a tripartite diagram of science, magic, and witchcraft would enable us to better understand witchcraft.³ I will briefly mention magic, which holds an important position between science and witchcraft. While sharing some aspects with science, magic usually allows humans an almost divine status. The magical world view as a whole is belief in a homo-centric universe. Magic in general was rejected by the official religion, i.e. Christianity. We can divide magic into two sub-categories: high magic and low magic. High magic, *divinatio*, is rather religious, philosophical, and scientific, and based upon occult knowledge. It is more philosophical and theoretical. With an emphasis on fate, high magic is concerned with personal destiny, herbal and natural powers, and cosmic powers. Low magic, *maleficium*, primarily focuses on evil-doing and immediate practical effects, which makes it rather similar witchcraft in the later period.

Witches are people who allegedly follow the devil, an agent of evil, and employ various means of witchcraft. According to the definition of low magic above, witches could be included in the category of “sorcerer.” In this sense, we can say the term ‘witch’ contains an exclusively theological meaning, but with connections to folklore. The religious cult of witches, even though built on the foundations of low magic and old traditions, was shaped and further defined by the Christian society in which those cults and witchcrafts functioned. Henry A. Kelly’s statement also supports this definition of witches: “In the context of Christian demonology, witchcraft means any human activity attributed to the help of [an] evil spirit. From the theological point of view, there is no difference between witchcraft, sorcery, and magic.”⁴ From a theological perspective, only opponents have changed as time has gone by. Andrew D. White is also in line with this view that “witchcraft arose within the context of a coherent and widespread magical world view and developed in the context of medieval Christianity.”⁵ Therefore, we can assert that witchcraft is a composite phenomenon drawing from folklore, sorcery, demonology, heresy, and Christian theology.

Witch-related phenomena were various, but they shared the foundation of certain core beliefs. Witches had peculiar powers to harm other people, enemies, neighbors, and churches. A witch was branded as someone who was motivated by ill-will, animosity, and lack of proper sense. They were viewed as misfits in their cultural, social, and religious circumstances. They were victims and at the same time instigators of certain tragedies, especially in times of deprivation, conflict, resentment, and rapid social and religious change. Alleged attacks by witches, or any harm to the church that was attributed to them became the main motivation for the oppression of witches. Oftentimes witches had a furtive and conspiratorial anti-society tendency. They were archetypical figures, frightening, numinous, threatening, associated with awe, obstinate wildness, and devilish behavior. In this sense, to the medieval church, they were more serious and sensational targets than those who

³ J. Russell, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages*, 3–5.

⁴ J. Russell, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages*, 16. Recitation.

⁵ J. Russell, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages*, 65.

were charged with sorcery.

What brought out phenomena such as witchcraft, a popular religion? It is hard to prove the reality of the supernatural power of witches, but we can trace three reasons for witch-related phenomena. (1) In socio-cultural contexts, outcasts like Jews, lepers, and women were often branded with offensive titles. People who didn't belong to the established dominant socio-cultural group had to find other social group, even unorthodox groups. (2) In religious-psychological contexts, medieval people were in need of a certain religious belief system to address to their deep human needs and anxieties. A spiritual world view was more prevalent than a materialistic world view. Most standard belief and behavior systems were shaped by Christian and feudal mythology. For religious and social discontents, witchcraft emerged as the strongest possible religious expression following in the tradition of pagans and magicians from before. Sometimes witches were more dangerous to the Church than infidels like Jews and Muslims. The Church's fear of witches' increases as the depression of religious outcasts grew, especially in periods of stress and instability. (3) We can assume that there were really some people who believed in witchcraft as a religious faith. Even though the mythological origins and interpretative system for witchcraft was disjointed, illogical, and only symbolically meaningful, some people seem to have found a religious meaning and value within a certain accepted structure of witchcraft. Proving the reality of witchcraft is not our concern here, but we cannot ignore the deep-rooted religious necessity in the mind of the people. Some might have confessed involvement with witchcraft because they were coerced into confession by the inquisitors and religious authorities. On the other hand, as many people had practiced magic and heretical beliefs before, we assume that some people likely really practiced witchcraft. In this sense, medieval witchcraft provides a strong mirror image of the mental, social, religious world of our ancestors. However, witch-related phenomenon, not belief in witchcraft, is our primary concern here.

Witches versus Bulls

Medieval Christendom had slowly but steadily issued various edicts, bulls, and statements against paganism, sorcery, and witchcraft. From the early middle ages, a series of edicts had been issued. In the Council of Elvira in 306, for example, the church refused the holy viaticum to those *per maleficium*, including devil and idol worshippers. In the Council of Trullo in 692, those people were excommunicated.

The Canon *Episcopi* is the most famous and controversial text in the history of witchcraft. Probably originated around 906, it was included in Gratian's *Decretum*, the law of the Catholic Church. It described many evil and unorthodox things concerning "the wicked women,"⁶ and it was a model for later controversies and writings on witchcraft.

Witches and witchcraft were a thorny issue for the church. The church entertained the general perception of witchcraft that I mentioned above. The church assumed that witches spread diabolic and evil power. The theme of compacts and

⁶ "Have you believed or have you shared a superstition to which some wicked women claim to have given themselves, instruments of Satan, fooled by diabolical phantasms? During the night, with Diana, the pagan goddess, in the company of a crowd of other women, they ride the backs of animals, traversing great distances during the silence of the deep night, obeying Diana's orders as their mistress and putting themselves at her service during certain specified nights. If only these sorceresses could die in their impiety without dragging many others into their loss. Fooled into error, many people believe that these rides of Diana really exist. Thus they leave the true faith and fall into pagan error in believing that a god or goddess can exist besides the only God."

contracts with Satan increased the negative image of witches in the eyes of Christendom. Also, witches abjured and criticized Jesus. Furthermore, they denounced the offices of the church, including the sacraments, the *Opus Dei*, and the mass.

Johannes Nider's *Formicarius* in 1435 offers detailed descriptions of the witches as viewed by contemporary Christians. The activities and characteristics of witches described in this text include cannibalistic infanticide, renunciation of Christianity, the appearance of demons in human shape, and instruction in harmful magic.⁷

In dealing with witches, the medieval Church employed every means from torture and burning to educational instruction. The bull of Pope Innocent VIII promulgated in 1484, *Summis desiderantes affectibus*, authorized the power to use against witches. In addition to these edicts, the Church tried to provide various other means of responding to witchcraft: catechism, confessional guides, sermons, and devotional and visual aids. Such tools, means, and instruments of repression that the Church employed eventually followed a tightly controlled hierarchical system. They also reflected the views of a coherent body of canon law. For internal and external purification and reform, the Church used all means.

Women in Medieval Church

There are certain conditions in dealing with female witch issues. First, historical sources from victimized women are sparse and records of many cases are dependent on documents produced by the male elite. Second, witch-hunting and accusations were the activity of men, the clergy, and politicians. Third, the witch-hunting craze took place in so many different social and political contexts, that it is not easy to approach it simply from a gender-based perspective.

Nevertheless, I accept as a historical phenomenon that women were the primary victims in the witch-hunting craze. The beings that witches followed were exclusively female, like Diana, Herodias and Holda. Even the *Malleus Maleficarum* agrees to that point, "A greater multitude is found among the weaker sex of women than among men." Old hags were often called "cursed old women" (*vetulas maledictas*).

Alexander of Hales (1183–1245) and Thomas Aquinas mentioned magic and women. Even though mostly repeating the theory of Augustine, Aquinas argued that all magic was caused by the exercise of demonic power, and that women are more prone to witchcraft.⁸

From the 14th–15th centuries, women appear significantly as major victims. The majority of those accused for witchcraft were women, esp. in Germany, England. Thus Christina Larner asks "Was witch-hunting women-hunting?" The question Larner raises is justifiably related to the question, "Is it sex-related but sex-specific?"⁹

First, let us consider the situation of a medieval widow and the phenomena of *dementia*. In medieval society, it was dangerous for women to live alone. The loneliness of women sometimes appeared related with mental disturbances. A woman's *dementia* was liable to harm her husband, the family, and society. Furthermore, mental disturbances were believed to affect domestic animals, thus causing agricultural damage.

⁷ *Formicarius, Quellen und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Hexenwahns unter der Hexenverfolgung im Mittelalter*, trans and ed. By Hans Biedermann (Akadem. Druck-u. Verlagsanst, 1971).

⁸ *The Summa Contra Gentiles*, III.2

⁹ Larner, *The Witchcraft Reader*, 205–212.

Second, midwives, medical female specialists, were frequently accused of being witches. When miscarriage and stillbirths occurred, people accused the midwives of eating the flesh of un-baptized children and of using the remains to make poisons with the help of devils. In other words, midwives could easily provide bodies for the devils.

Third, there is the issue of sexual images in *incubis*. Since the trial of Dame Alice Kyteler in Ireland (1324), sexual relations with an incubus demon became a typical story.¹⁰ The case of Dame Alice shows instances of what became regarded as typical phenomena related to witchcraft: multiple murders, the summoning up of demons, and sexual intercourse. It did not as yet show the witches' Sabbath. As Innocent VIII mentioned in the bull *Summis desiderantes*, women were believed to impede fertility.

Interestingly, it seems that women were simply accused of the opposite of the roles that they traditionally kept. Marienne Hester calls this the "reversal of accepted female roles,"¹¹ and it oftentimes happened to restructure gender relations during a period of change. Women were the child-bearers, but they were accused of being "chattels created to bear children." Women's menstruation and post child-birth melancholy were often regarded as witch-related phenomena. The multiple roles of cook, nurse, midwife, and house-keeper were linked to accusations of the various roles of sorcerers. Herb collecting and the use of charms, which were usually part of a woman's domain, were considered suggestive of the predisposition to witchcraft. It will be interesting to see why women were accused of the roles that they usually followed in their routine life.

The *Malleus maleficarum* (*The Hammer of Witches*), written by Heinrich Kramer & Jacob Sprenger and submitted to the University of Cologne in 1486, contains a couple of interesting statements about women.¹² Its main purpose was to challenge all arguments against the existence of witchcraft and to instruct magistrates and religious leaders on how to identify, interrogate, and convict witches. The *Malleus* provided a judicial support to oppress and murder alleged witches. Since its first public appearance, it became the de-facto handbook for witch-hunting and inquisitions, and it went through many reprintings—13 times between 1486 and 1520¹³. We can easily see its popularity and the tremendous influence of this book in the witch trials.

Two points from Kramer's arguments draws our attention. First, he argued that witches really exist, as shown in the night ride with Diana and (canon *Episopi*); second, women are prone to being witches mainly because of their intellectual feebleness, moral weakness, and sexual passion. Women's weakness can be seen in *incubi* itself (copulation with devils). Talking about *crimen exceptum* (special crime), they claimed that inquisitors and clergy required even torture to eliminate them (I.13).

The *Malleus* clearly blames women in witchcraft, and is permeated with a hostile and negative view of women. The form and the contents of the *Malleus* can be seen as a self-conscious literary attack on the female gender in general. The Latin title of this book itself is female in gender! This book undoubtedly shows how, in the context of Christian history, women were understood as *Ianua diabolic* (the devil's gateway),

¹⁰ *The Sorcery Trial of Alice Kyteler*, eds. L.S. Davidson and J.O. Ward. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies (Binghamton, NY, 1993).

¹¹ Marienne Hester, *The Witchcraft Reader*, 276–862.

¹² *The Malleus Maleficarum*

¹³ 19 times reprinted between 1569 and 1669. *The Malleus* consists of 3 parts, (Part I has 18 questions; Part II has 2 questions, within it 24 chapters; Part III has 35 questions).

a view that has a long, controversial history since the patristic epithet for women in early Christianity.

A simple look at the chapter title reveals the logic of the *Malleus*. Question 6 of Part I discusses the following issue: "Concerning witches who copulate with Devils. Why is it that women are chiefly addicted to evil superstitions?" Question 11 of Part I: "That witches who are midwives in various ways kill the child conceived in the womb..." Chapter 5 of Part II raises the following question: "Witches commonly perform their spells through the sacraments of the church. And how they impair the powers of generation, and how they may cause other ills to happen to God's creatures of all kinds..." Question 19 of Part III even justifies the use of torture.

Women were in every way considered morally and mentally inferior to men, so eventually witches were necessarily women! But they are not simply "the chattels created to bear children."

"Anxiety in the Secured Garden"—Concluding Remarks

The witch-hunting craze of medieval times was only the prelude of the later full scale witch-hunting craze. We have various sources based upon learned tradition, popular tradition, and actual practice. Medieval witchcraft can be explained in many ways. It can reflect an innate and perennial religious pursuit of human nature, often directed to the 'dark side' like paganism, magic, and witchcraft. As we have examined, there can be many ways to interpret the predominant number of women victims. Nevertheless, our main interest lies in the fact that there were an outstanding number of women accused of witchcraft, as opposed to men, and the relationship between witches and the Christian perception. How can we interpret the phenomena of witchcraft and the interaction between female witches and medieval Christianity? The following points help to open further arguments.

From persecuted minority to persecuting mainstream: When Christianity was still a minority, the church seems to have had a certain capability of assimilation by which they could embrace and digest pagan culture and belief in some degree. As Peter Brown indicates, saints' cults and festivals in early and late-antiquity Christianity showed this aspect. As the dominance and the power of the church grew, the room for assimilation lessened, and a spirit of condemnation and persecution grew. The changing of the labels for the church's opponents, from pagans, to magicians, heretics, and witches, illuminates this probability. Once the church secured its garden, it could not endure any difference and deviation.

It is also related to the issue of Institutionalizing or de-institutionalizing process. Witches appear frequently at the peak of the church's power, for example right after the 14th century. When the church thought it had attained a complete Christendom, at least in its own understanding, it was not willing to show any mercy to rebellious 'wolves.' The rules of inquisition and conviction were clear. And, ironically, "as popular hysteria about witchcraft grew, more people convinced themselves that they were witches."¹⁴ But the official and institutionalized church power couldn't eradicate other voices and religious pursuits completely. In another sense, Witches and witch-related phenomena can be seen as a 'de-institutionalization process' in medieval Christianity. The fact that the number of witches increased could have been a result of coerced confession, but this can also be seen as a social and theological product and another face of medieval Christianity.

We can also see the great anxiety experienced in a changing world, religiously, and socially. Even though the medieval church thought it ruled its spiritual territory

¹⁴ Russell, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages*, 288.

without any uncertainty, it failed to meet the perceptible changes that were taking place rapidly. It caused greater anxiety in the maleficent acts of witches and dissenters. The religious and symbolic order and power the Church had worked so hard to secure was cracking in its own back yard. As S. M. Lowe mentions, in this sense, it is noteworthy to look at three points: institutionalization, symbolic order, and perception of the people! In anxiety, alienated and neglected people pursued a certainty—religious, social, and psychological. At the same time, the church felt anxiety in the midst of its secured power. Both anxieties and instabilities clashed, and the weak and lowly people especially stayed outside the dominant religious ideology and became scapegoats. In this respect, I agree with the point that “The witch and the witch-hunter were children of one bewilderment, sharing one blind vengefulness, reflecting one mentality, and stemming from one inner necessity.”¹⁵ The same elements of human psychology, the magical world view, and the social tensions that produced an atmosphere of fear and tension leading to the rise of witchcraft also produced the craze against witchcraft!

As a theologian, where can I find my place in this argument? Honestly speaking, it is sad to recognize the role of the medieval theologians. Kieckhefer’s following phrase simply challenges my mind and heart.

“One must surely conclude that the drastic increase in trials for sorcery came about primarily because of anxieties felt throughout the society... The jurists and theologians who suggested this charge supplied a new dimension to the craze that was already under way, adding fuel to an already blazing fire. The masses and the intellectual elite combined their energies in a task of common concern and demonstrated that the fruits of such cooperation are by no means necessarily salutary.”¹⁶

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¹⁵ Lynn White, “The Spread Wolves,” *Saturday Review of Literature*, XXXVII(Nov. 13, 1954), 33.

¹⁶ R.Kieckhefer, *European Witch Trials*, 105.



*Illustrations depicting
Waldensians as witches in Le
champion des dames, by Martin
Le France, 1451.*

Introduction: Witches and vampires draw much attention on Halloween day, in the Harry Potter novels, and in vampire movies. Whether or not they believe in them in a religious sense, many people nowadays simply assume that sort of world and witchcraft might exist somewhere. Personal preference, imagination, and imitation to witchcraft simply cause a grudging complaint from Christianity. In the medieval world, alleged magicians and witches were out there but their activity was restricted by the watchful eyes of the church.

Witchcraft refers to a certain power that generates a supernatural phenomenon by means of humans, often called witches, not directly by means a divine being. Witches were believed to conduct various harmful deeds in society and to the church with the help of devils. Witchcraft frequently appears to be related to a diabolic power, to magic, and to evil in a negative and pejorative

sense.

A witch is often described as someone who invokes evil passion, brings calamity, and even calls up the dead. Witches were believed to have the power to cast magic spells, dance with the devil, and ride brooms to attend at the Sabbath. Are witches realities, fantasy, fiction, or the presumed belief-system of certain people? Documents and stories from the middle ages tell that people conducted black masses and worshipped strange gods. In spite of the controversy over the factuality of phenomena, many people seemed to regard witchcraft as a genuine experience, whether religious, cultural, or psychological.

Coexisting and competing with pagan beliefs and sorcery in medieval Christianity, witch trials and related controversies came to the forefront in the 14th– 15th centuries, and reached its peak between the 16 and 17th centuries. Richard Kieckhefer's "Calendar of Witch Trials" tells that witchcraft was a wide phenomenon in the 1300–1500. This was the beginning stage of the witch controversy, but it provided a real momentum for further witch trials. Even if Kieckhefer's use of the term witchcraft includes sorcery, invocation, diabolism (similar to witchcraft), we can see that witchcraft emerged as a major issue in late medieval Christianity.

In 1835, a group of American colonists, led by Dr. Charles Beale, were camped at Lake Espantosa, a renowned haunted location near what is now Carrizo Springs in southwest Texas. Half a mile away from the Beale group, John Dent and his pregnant wife Mollie Pertul Dent, both from Georgia, had built a brush cabin.

Dent had come to trap beaver in the Devil's River area, north of the present day Del-Rio, but was also on the run from the law for the murder of a fellow trapper in Georgia. The Dents were to prove fortunate in their choice of a site distant from the lake. A band of Comanches raided the main Beale camp and massacred most of the inhabitants, afterwards throwing the bodies of the victims and their carts into the lake.

A Haunted Location

Even at this time Espantosa Lake had acquired a reputation for ghostly goings-on, this incident adding to the store of ill-luck and sorrow centering on what, to this day Mexicans consider a haunted location, the name Espantosa meaning 'frightful'.

As Mollie was approaching the end of her pregnancy, the couple were reluctant to travel despite the danger of hostile Indians. One night in May 1835, there was a severe thunderstorm and Mollie went into labor. She appeared to be having problems with the birth so Dent decided to ride westwards for help. He arrived at a Mexican goat ranch on the Pecos Canyon, and told them desperately about his wife's condition, begging for someone to ride back with him.

But as the Mexicans prepared their horses to leave there was a furious crash of thunder and a bolt of lightning struck Dent from his horse killing him instantly. After a considerable delay the goat herders mounted up and followed Dent's directions. However, darkness fell before they had got over the divide to Devil's River, thus delaying the search. Finally, at sunrise the next morning they located the Dent's isolated cabin.

But what they found outside the cabin, in an open brush arbor, was Mollie Dent lying dead, alone. She had apparently died in childbirth, but there was no trace of the baby anywhere. The child was never found, but fang marks on the woman's body and numerous wolf tracks over the area made the goat herders naturally assume that the infant had either been devoured or carried off by lobo wolves.

First Sighting of the Wolf Girl

But this was just the beginning of the story. Ten years later, In 1845, a boy living at San Felipe Springs (Del-Rio) reportedly saw 'a creature, with long hair covering its features, that looked like a naked girl' attacking a herd of goats in the company of a pack of lobo wolves. The story was ridiculed by many, but still managed to spread back among the settlements. Around a year after this incident, a Mexican woman at San Felipe claimed she had seen two large wolves and an unclothed young girl devouring a freshly killed goat. She approached

close to the group, she said, before they saw her and ran off.

The woman noticed that the girl ran initially on all-fours, but then rose up and ran on two feet, keeping close to the wolves. The woman was in no doubt about what she had seen, and the scattering of people in the Devil's River country began to keep a sharp watch for the girl. There were similar reports by others in the region during the following year and Apache stories told of a child's footprints, sometimes accompanied by hand prints, having been found among wolf tracks in sandy places along the river. A hunt was organised to capture the 'Lobo (or Wolf) Girl of Devil's River' as she had now become known, comprising mainly Mexican vaqueros. On the third day of the hunt the naked girl was sighted near Espantosa Lake running with a pack of wolves.

The cowboys managed to separate the girl from her wolf companions and cornered her in a canyon, where she fought like a wildcat clawing and biting frantically to keep her freedom. They finally managed to lasso her to keep her still, but while they were tying her up she began to make frightening, unearthly sounds somewhere between the scream of a woman and the howl of a wolf. As she howled, the monster he-wolf from whom she'd become separated appeared and rushed at her captors. Fortunately one of the cowboys reacted quickly and shot it dead with a pistol, at which the wolf girl fell into a faint. Securely bound, the men were now able to examine the girl and noted that despite a body covered in hair and her wild mannerisms, her appearance was human. Her hands and arms were well muscled but not out of proportion, and she lacked the ability to speak, only making deep growling noises. She moved smoothly on all fours, but was rather awkward when made to stand up straight.

The girl was put on a horse and taken to the nearest ranch, an isolated two-roomed shack amid the desert wilderness. She was put in one of the rooms and unbound, the cowboys offering her a covering for her body and food and water, but she refused, cowering in the darkest corner. They then left her alone for the night, locking the door and posting a guard outside. The only other opening in the room was a small boarded up window.

Ghostly Cries

But as night fell the cowboys heard terrifying howls coming from the wolf girl's room. The strange cries carried through the still night air, unsettling her captors and soon finding answers from among the wolf pack in the wilderness beyond the shack. Soon there were long deep howls coming from all sides as the pack drew closer to the house, and occasionally strange howling screams from the girl answering them from inside her dark room. Suddenly the large pack of wolves charged into the corrals, attacking the goats, cows and horses and bringing the cowboys outside shooting and yelling to drive them away. In all the confusion the wolf girl managed to tear the planks from the window and escape into the night. The howls soon abated and the wolves crept back into the wilderness. The next day not a trace of the girl could be found.

Though there were a few unverified reports in the following years of a young hair-covered girl being seen with a wolf pack in the area, no one ever came in close contact with her. Meanwhile gold had been discovered in California and westward travel had increased significantly. In 1852 a surveying party of frontiersmen searching for a new route to El Paso

were riding down to the Rio Grande at a bend far above the mouth of Devil's River. They were almost at the water's edge when they saw at close range, sitting on a sand bar, a young woman suckling two wolf cubs. Suddenly she saw them, quickly grabbed the pups and dashed into the breaks at such a rate that it was impossible for the horsemen to follow.

The girl would have been seventeen years-old that year. After that she disappeared into the wilderness forever. It is impossible now to know what became of Mollie Dent's daughter, presuming that's who the wolf girl was. There were subsequent reports of 'human-faced' wolves in the area right up until the 1930s, and author L.D. Bertillion (see sources below), wrote in 1937, 'during the past forty years I have in the western country met more than one wolf face strongly marked with human characteristics'.

The Ghost of Devil's River

The story of the Wolf Girl of Devil's River reads more like a folktale than a real feral child case, and the large amount of evidence for what happened is all anecdotal. She does, however, seem to live on in a more subtle form; her 'ghost' has apparently been seen in the old San Felipe Springs area beside the banks of Devil's River. In 1974 (the same year as the **Delphos wolf girl** in Kansas), a hunter in this area claimed to have seen her again, in the form of a white apparition which vanished before his eyes.

Back in the autumn of 1835, when John and Mollie Dent had newly arrived in Texas, Mollie wrote her mother an odd letter. It said merely -

'Dear Mother,

The Devil has a river in Texas that is all his own

and it is made only for those who are grown.

Yours with love

Mollie'.

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Woman arrested for living with husband's corpse

CNN, wtsp.com

wtsp.com



Ila Solomon

Ila Solomon(Photo: WRTV/CNN)

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. (WRTV/CNN) -- An Indiana woman is in jail, accused of living with her 88-year-old husband's corpse for nine months and claiming he wanted to be eaten by birds, all while she continued to collect his retirement checks.

Police say she lied about the bizarre circumstances of his death.

In an exclusive interview with Ila Solomon in August, she admitted to breaking the law.

"I know I did commit failure to report and that is a crime, I don't know if they'll charge me with failure to report or not," she said in August.



An Indiana woman is in jail, accused of living with her 88-year-old husband's corpse for nine months and claiming he wanted to be eaten by birds, all while she continued to collect his retirement checks.

Prosecutors did charge her with the class a misdemeanor of failure to report a dead body.

In June, she talked to a reporter about the circumstances surrounding her husband Gerald Gavan's death.

"I know he went and got a haircut that day and I know he went over to McDonald's and had a cup of coffee that day," Solomon said in June.

She said Gavan died April 28 from a stroke.

And she claims her husband wanted to be eaten by birds following his death, so she says she opened windows and doors every day after he died.

"So he wanted me to open the door so the birds could come in but the birds only got as far as

the air conditioner," Solomon said.

His body rotted for months on the floor of a room in their home, leaving behind a gruesome stain.

Court documents indicate that Solomon told Lafayette police a different story than what she told the reporter.

When police arrived looking for Gavan on May 3, Solomon told officers Gavan was travelling with her sister and brother-in-law, saying they went to the Kentucky Derby.

When police asked about Gavan's health, she told them he suffered a stroke and was in an assisted living facility. Police got suspicious and entered the house.

There, they found a tarp covered by bed covers and a powdery substance that appeared to be lime. They found Gavan's body in advanced stage of decay.

The coroner determined Gavan's body had been there for 9 months.

Documents show Solomon had been married at least twice before, and possibly three times before she married Gavan in 2012. Her second marriage -- to Jerry Eaton -- happened just 9 days after divorcing her first husband, Wendell Solomon in White County, Ind., back in 1994.

Solomon now sits in jail facing multiple felonies for theft and welfare fraud, cashing Social Security and pension checks that belonged to her dead husband -- while his body was decomposing on their home's hardwood floor.

The coroner says Gavan's cause of death remains unknown.

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By Polly Davis Doig, Newser Staff
Posted Oct 12, 2014 10:55 AM CDT

(Newser) – If you've always equated "fire-breathing" with "unnecessarily and insanely dangerous," well, your point was proven yesterday in Ohio. A 23-year-old woman was hospitalized after what the AP terms "performing a fire-breathing act at a Halloween-themed running event." The woman, who has identified herself via Facebook as Ashley Keach, was apparently breathing a little flame last night at the Blood Run 5K, reports the *Columbus Dispatch*, when as a witness put it, "The fire breather just caught on fire." Keach reportedly suffered burns to her face, neck, and top half of her body, as per scanner traffic; she says her injuries are minor and that she'll be "just fine." Also, she says she "probably should have invested in that flame proof gel."

Oct 12, 2014 8:36 PM CDT

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